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SHARP SAM; Or, THE ADVENTURES OF A FRIENDLESS BOY.

BY J. ALEXANDER PATTEN.



"REMEMBER ALL I'VE TOLD YOU TO DO. BE SMART, NOW, AN' LEAVE THESE WALLS BEHIND YOU
AS QUICK AS YOU CAN, UP WITH YOU."

Sharp Sam;

OR,

The Adventures of a Friendless Boy.

A STORY OF THE GREAT CITY.

BY J. ALEXANDER PATTEN.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST GREAT CRIME.

At the close of an autumn day the rain fell in torrents in New York.

The streets were flooded, the houses were dripping, and still the torrents and sheets of water descended.

Few pedestrians were to be seen, and as the overcrowded horse-cars made their way along, the horses and drivers could hardly see through the thick and driving storm.

It was a dense fall of water, which was caught by the strong northeast wind, and hurled in masses and blinding spray against and upon every object.

The wind sighed and howled through the streets and avenues like some terrified spirit of evil.

At such a time a boy was crouching in the doorway of a dwelling-house.

When every one was, more or less, in a state of apprehension from the severity of the storm, it may well be supposed that a young and friendless boy, driven for shelter to a doorway, might feel some alarm. And yet, young as he was, so rugged had been his path in life, and so many terrors and trials had he already passed through, that, probably, after all, there were many older persons who, even in their homes, were more alarmed than this poor boy.

He shivered with the cold, for both his clothes and blood were thin from poverty, and, as the deluge of rain and furious wind swept by him, he wedged himself into the corner, until the door began to give signs of yielding to the pressure.

The house was in one of the best up-town streets. It was, however, an old-fashioned, dingy-looking structure of brick, which had been built in a long anterior period.

"Jingo," said the boy, "will the rain never stop? I don't mind a storm much—here's nothin' to hurt 'bout me, but a fellow can't make headway in this 'ere one. Besides, there's too many bricks an' other stuff fallin'."

A burst of wind now carried a large quantity of water directly to the doorway, and it fell in a shower on the head of the already wet and shivering boy.

"Look at that now," he cried, between his chattering teeth. "It's like a gutter, or a waterin'-pot, over my head."

He crowded closer, and, as he did so, there came another powerful blast of the wind. Altogether the pressure was more than the door could bear, for, it suddenly flew open, and the boy fell at full length on his back in the hall.

Hardly understanding what had happened, and thoroughly frightened to find himself inside of the house, he was about to jump up and run away, when his ear caught distinctly the cry of:

"Murder!—murder!"

In a moment there came another scream, but not so loud as the first:

"Murder!—mur—d—e—r!"

The boy was very pale and trembled violently, but a courage which was natural to him was beginning to assert itself. Next he heard a noise on an upper stairs, when he said:

"Some one is comin'. The murderer, no doubt. I'll hide an' git a look at him."

Thus speaking he noiselessly drew back into the hall.

The sound of approaching steps on the stairs came

nearer, and directly the figure of a man appeared. As he passed under the hall-light the boy had an opportunity to see his features very distinctly. Hurrying on he exclaimed:

"Home of my youth, farewell!"

Striking his brow with his clinched hand he uttered a groan of intense agony and then rushed across the threshold into the street and storm.

"This is tragedy, no mistake," muttered the boy. "Where am I, and what's been done up-stairs? I've no 'gagement this evenin', and I'll play detective for awhile."

First closing the front door, the boy began ascending the stairs very cautiously, and, now that he had undertaken the adventure, was not a little frightened again. Not a sound was to be heard, except the noise of the storm without. The first hall that he came to was perfectly dark, but at the end of it he noticed a ray of light coming through the crevice of a door.

He walked slowly, but boldly toward the light. He then stood for a moment at the door listening and trying to peer into the room. There was no sound, and he could not see anything except the wall and some doors. Pushing the door a little he put in his head and quickly withdrew it.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "There has been a murder. I'll go and tell the police that there is a woman all covered with blood in this 'ere very room."

He dashed off and down the stairs, but, to his astonishment, at the foot of the last flight ran directly into the grasp of a policeman.

"You young thief," exclaimed the policeman, "I've caught you slick enough. When I found the door open I knew that some villain had got inside."

The front door had been again blown open by the wind.

"I haven't stolen a cent's worth," replied the boy. "But there's a murdered woman up-stairs."

"A murdered woman," repeated the policeman, in astonishment, and making his grip on the boy more secure. "Crime's increasing indeed, when a boy like you can murder a woman. I'll rap for assistance."

"I didn't do it," exclaimed the boy, in terror.

"Tell that to the jury, and they may believe you, if they are fools, but, as for me, I'm too well acquainted with the dangerous classes to believe a word of it."

Dragging the frightened boy to the sidewalk he rapped for assistance which soon came.

Sure enough the body of a murdered woman was found in the back second-story room, with no other person in the house except the boy, who had been arrested in seeming flight on the stairs. He was taken to the station-house, and the journals of the next day gave most exhaustive and thrilling accounts of the mysterious murder supposed to have been perpetrated by a boy who called himself "Sharp Sam."

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERVIEW AND ITS TERRIBLE RESULT.

THE real murderer had fled through the streets. The storm beat upon him, but he heeded it not. Within his own bosom was a tempest of anguish, a frenzy of self-accusation, and an agony of remorse, which together benumbed him to all else.

The history of this man was both strange and sad.

Henry Beekman had the blood of one of the oldest and best families of New York. His father was born in wealth, educated at Columbia College, and then sent abroad for the additional culture of foreign travel and society. On his return, it was expected that he would make a distinguished marriage, but it so happened that on the voyage home he became acquainted with a young lady passenger, with whom he fell desperately in love.

So rash was he, in view of his future prospects, that he secretly married this lady a few days after

his arrival. Dependent upon his father, however, the secret had soon to be told, when there was an exciting scene, and he was subsequently disinherited.

His wife and himself then undertook to support themselves by teaching and painting and sketching as artists. A male child was born to them. Then came misfortune after misfortune, and, at length, wearied with the struggle, they committed suicide by inhaling the fumes of charcoal. When they were found the infant was still alive, and after great difficulty it was restored to consciousness.

Now the father relented, and received the grandson into his household. This child was the Henry Beekman of our story. He grew up the image of his father, and with marked intelligence and talents.

As both boy and man he was noted for his impulsive and passionate disposition. Kind hearted and reasonable at other times, he would quickly lose control of himself, and say and do things which caused him much subsequent regret.

In a moment of sudden quarrel, after he had reached manhood, he wounded a gentleman of the city, and as a result, left the country. He wandered in different parts of the world, a reckless and abandoned man, and only a few days before the opening of our tale had returned to New York.

On the afternoon of the storm he had sought the old mansion. His purpose was to obtain money. Much to his surprise, he found that his grandfather and grandmother were both dead, and that the only occupant of the residence was an aged aunt of his father's, who had inherited most of the property.

She was an eccentric and miserly person, and lived alone, having a woman to visit the house daily to do some of the necessary work. She had always hated Henry Beekman, and regarded him as one of the worst of men.

As she sat in her room on this afternoon, clad in old and patched garments, though she had closets full of the finest silk and other dresses, she was startled by the ringing of the door-bell. It was so unusual for her to have visitors that she went down to the door with considerable trepidation. When she was informed of the name of the person she instantly sought to close the door, and exclaimed:

"Mercy on me. Go away!"

But Henry Beekman was in no mood to be treated in this manner, and so with a little force he pushed open the door and entered.

"Well," he said, "after years of absence, this is not a very hospitable welcome to the house of one's grandfather."

"Your grandfather and grandmother," replied the old woman, as she stood the picture of fright and dismay, "are dead."

"Dead!" repeated the man.

"Your grandfather and grandmother had nothing more to live for," said the other, somewhat recovering herself, with the prospect of giving a long contemplated piece of her mind to the person before her. "Your father disgraced them, and you—you, sir—have put a stain on the family name forever."

The man winced and turned red, but he controlled himself, and calmly remarked:

"As an heir, I wish to inquire what my share of the property is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the old lady. "I will tell you. Not one cent. Ha, ha, ha!"

Disregarding her laughter and scorn, Beekman again asked:

"Who did inherit my grandfather's wealth?"

"I did, or, at least, the most of it."

The old lady drew herself up, proudly, and looked with an intense glare of malice and triumph upon her questioner.

Little did she know what was passing in the mind of the man. Quickly he had resolved upon a plan, and he had the nerve to execute it, though it was a desperate and bloody one.

"Will you not invite me to a room where I can talk with you further, after my long absence, and

await the cessation of the storm?" asked Beekman, in a most polite manner.

The woman felt no objection to prolonging an interview which was really a source of pleasure to her.

"Yes," she replied; "you can walk up to my sitting-room. I suppose you will not come soon, again, and there are some matters you may like to hear."

"You are very kind," said Beekman, with a profound bow. "The heir of this mansion cannot, of course, forget that it was once famed for its hospitality and politeness."

As he thus spoke, he looked as if he felt coursing through his veins the proud blood of his ancestors. As he ascended the stairs his countenance had totally changed. It became scowling and vindictive—it spoke of deeply-aroused feelings, and of a torrent of passion ready to burst forth.

"Old fiend!" he muttered; "your moments are short. You expect to torture me further, do you? Your malice has outrun your reason."

We have said that the original purpose of Beekman in coming to this house was to obtain money from his relations. In the altered condition of affairs, he saw that if he got any, it must be by the robbery of the old lady. This he had already determined upon, and, furthermore, that even murder should not prevent him from accomplishing his plan.

When the room was reached, the old lady invited him to be seated. Instead of doing this, he suddenly closed the door and locked it.

"What do you mean by locking the door?" she demanded, pale with fear.

"Simply this," said Beekman, with perfect calmness. "You have insulted me, and brought me up here to continue it. You think I am a bad man, but, old woman, you do not know how much of a devil I am, or you would not have brought me here."

"Go," cried the old lady; "go at once! I will not say anything more."

"Silence, and hear me!" commanded Beekman. "I know you of old. You are not only rich, but miserly. These drawers and boxes here are full of money. I am in want of some. Give it to me, and I will go forever."

"Then you are a robber!" screamed the old woman. "I'll call the police."

She made a spring toward the window, but with one blow Beekman felled her to the floor.

After this he was a madman. His passion, long held in check, asserted itself, and he thought of nothing but vengeance on his tormentor, and the accomplishment of his purpose.

He caught her up and threw her upon the bed. Then his hands grasped her neck and choked her. After a few outcries all was over.

"She is dead," he said, almost out of breath. "Now for some of her money."

The first bureau drawer that he opened was full of money. There was a most astonishing hoard of gold and silver in boxes and bags, and bank-bills in bundles. He filled his pockets and bosom, and then he fled from the room, down the stairs and into the street. When some distance from the house, he said to himself, to quiet his disturbed feelings:

"At all events no human eye could have seen me."

CHAPTER III.

SHARP SAM IN THE TOMBS.

"In the Tombs," said Sharp Sam, as one of the keepers ushered him into a cell in that famous prison. "I'm disgraced."

"It's not often we're honored with so little a fellow charged with so big a crime," said the keeper.

"It's a mistake."

"Every one that's here says the same."

"I'm bound to git out," cried the boy, as he looked about the small white-washed cell.

"There's no bail for murder," replied the man; "and I'm thinking you'll have to be contented here for some time. You'll be well treated enough, especially as you will rank with the big criminals."

Thus speaking, he closed the inside door of the cell, and left the boy to his reflections.

Sharp Sam had led a hard life, but he had never been in a prison. Consequently, he was not a little shocked and stunned when he realized that he was the inmate of a cell in the Tombs.

Tears started to his eyes, and going to the heavy iron door he tried to shake it.

"Let me out!" he cried. "Let me out!"

He looked up and around him, still crying. Everywhere he saw the high, smooth, whitewashed wall, except in one part, a narrow space through which the light was admitted. In a corner was an iron bedstead, and on this he finally threw himself, sobbing most bitterly.

Though only a poor waif he had never experienced such a wretchedness of heart before. With his freedom he was ready to meet fate as it might come, but now a prisoner, charged with a grave crime, he realized his utter friendlessness and danger.

His troubles soon exhausted him, and he fell into a deep sleep.

Some time after the bolts of the door were turned back, and it was opened. Then the same turnkey who had locked up Sharp Sam placed a man in the cell and turned his key upon both of them.

This prison is constantly so crowded that two prisoners and sometimes more are placed in each cell. There is no classification, except a criminal one of putting persons charged with the highest offenses together, and consequently there is no greater school of vice than the Tombs itself.

"Murder! murder!" was the ringing cry of Sharp Sam, in his sleep on the prison bed.

"Poor little kid," said the other prisoner. "He has had dreams."

"I'd know him," muttered the boy.

"Of course you would," said the man, smiling, "particularly if you keep your eyes shut."

Sam awoke at the moment and started up, saying:

"Mister, are you the keeper?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the man. "No, my little kid, I ain't the keeper, but I'm one of the kept. Wake up, and tell me who you are."

"I'm Sharp Sam," returned the boy, still rubbing his eyes.

"Ah!" said the other, with a deep breath. "I've read of you. You're in for murderin' an old woman. I'm Tall Mike, and the charge ag'in' me is burglary. Let's be friends. Who's your counsel?"

"I ain't got no counsel."

"It's time you had. Why, the coroner's jury has found ag'in' you already. I read it myself in the paper, and the fu'st thing you know they'll indict you, try you, and hang you in the yard outside."

The boy jumped from the bed, with his eyes almost starting from their sockets, and demanded:

"What for? I didn't do nothin'!"

"You didn't, hey?" said the man, with a severe look. "I know you're young for murder, but the city boys are awful smart and bad, nowadays. So you thought you'd steal a little—do a little in my way—and you—took her precious life."

These last words he hissed in a whisper in Sam's ear.

"No, I didn't," returned the boy, "but I saw a man run away."

"You're Sharp Sam, sure enough," said the man. "I see you have manufactured a defense already. Tell me your story."

Sam then faithfully related all he knew about the murder. When he had concluded, the man said:

"It's a clever story, but it won't do. You're bound to hang, I think."

"I'll escape."

"How?"

Poor Sam had no answer to this question. His heart was in his throat when he glanced upon the thick walls and the iron doors.

"Men," said the prisoner, in low and deliberate words, "don't often get out of these strong prisons,

but I know a way for a small boy like yourself to get out."

"Oh, thank you, mister," said Sam, crying again, but now with joy. "How can I get out?"

"Talk low," returned the man; "walls have ears. Do you see that slit of a window up there?"

"Yes," said Sam, "but that is too narrow."

"With a prison on one side and liberty on the other, a man has gone through a window like that," replied Tall Mike.

"Then I can do it, like rollin' off a log," cried Sam, as his naturally buoyant spirits began to return to him.

"Well, it must be near grub time," said Tall Mike, "an' we'd better quiet down. I like you, and I'll help you all I can."

"Bully!" cried Sam.

To further express his changed feelings, he began whistling a merry tune. Such are the quick revolutions of the childish heart.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ACCIDENT AT THE REVIEW.

"WHAT a splendid-looking man!"

"Which one, Flora?"

"Why, that one with the dark curly hair. Don't you see him, Sallie? He's looking straight at us."

These were the remarks made by two young girls who had places on the reviewing-stand near the Fifth Avenue Hotel, on an afternoon when the autumn review of the First Division of the National Guard was to take place. The person to whom they alluded was Mr. Henry Beekman, who, attired in faultless fashion, occupied one of the windows of a neighboring club-house.

Broadway, Madison square and Fifth avenue were crowded with people, and the sound of the bands of the gathering military was heard in all directions. It was to be a gala afternoon. The Governor of the State was to review the troops, and, as the day was fine, the people of all classes had turned out in great numbers.

As was usual on such occasions, a temporary platform had been erected in front of the Worth Monument, where the Governor and staff were to witness the marching. Military officers, city officials and other distinguished persons, with their families, were admitted to the platform by ticket.

There was a long delay, as is always the case. But the happy, and somewhat giddy, young ladies before named, did not mind it. The splendid and animated scene, as they could view it from their unusual position, filled them with delight. Drawn away as their attention was from time to time, they did not forget the handsome man in the club-house window, and cast shy glances that way very frequently.

"He stands as still as a statue," said Sallie.

"Yes, a perfect Apollo," replied Flora, with enthusiasm.

"I wonder who he is? Some English lord, perhaps."

"I don't think so, Sallie. I'm sure he is an American."

"We'll never know, Flora. How sad."

Now the strains of music grew louder and nearer, and there was a movement everywhere among the people that gave evidence that at last the troops were approaching. As far as the vision could extend up Fifth avenue, which was a long distance, the companies, and regiments, and brigades could be seen wheeling into line. Nodding plumes of gay hues, uniforms of many colors, masses of cavalry, long lines of artillery, and thousands of infantrymen. On they came—while from every window, every stoop, and every other place of observation, the gazing people waved pocket-handkerchiefs, clapped their hands and cheered.

When the Governor had taken the proper position, the marching review began.

The crowd was very dense at the platform. With the exception of the space occupied by the military,

all the street, close up to the buildings, was a packed and restless mass of people.

"I don't think this platform is very strong," remarked Sallie. "I wish I was down on the pavement again."

By this time all the military had passed, and there was a sudden movement on the platform, and in the square and streets. To add to the confusion, an officer's horse became unmanageable.

The animal reared and kicked, and suddenly wheeling, threw the officer. Then he dashed off in the direction of the platform, while the police and others tried to catch him, and hundreds of men, women and children ran hither and thither in affright.

On the platform the commotion was truly alarming.

"Don't crowd," implored the gentlemen.

"We'll break through," cried a lady.

"That railing won't stand such pushing," said another.

"Oh, dear!" cried Sallie, who was near the railing, "they will surely push us off."

There was a surge of the crowd, and then a sharp noise of breaking wood, and the railing gave way.

One clung to another, and there was a wild alarm, but only one person fell. This was Sallie.

As she fell, she screamed, and then became unconscious. But not the slightest harm came to her. Providentially a gentleman stood on the very spot where she would have fallen, and he gallantly received and supported her. Finding that she had fainted, he instantly bore her to a drug-store on the opposite side of the street. Here she was soon revived, but almost fainted a second time, when she discovered before her the gentleman of the club-house window.

"You have had," he said, addressing her with great politeness and sympathy, "a narrow escape. Fortunately I was on the spot to catch you. Permit me to hand you my card. I will immediately order a carriage, so that you may return to your home."

There were such contending emotions in the heart of the young lady that she was obliged to look rather than to speak her thanks. Her friend, Flora, by this time had found her way to the store, and she also joined in her thanks, and informed the gentleman of the names and addresses of both. After entering the carriage at the door, Sallie turned to him and said:

"Be sure and call. My parents must thank you."

While he was giving his reply, the carriage rolled away.

"What luck!" said Beekman, as he looked after the carriage. "I'll follow up this chance acquaintance. It may involve me in more crime, but I see a nice opportunity to rake in some money."

CHAPTER V.

SHARP SAM'S HOME.

GREAT had been the consternation and excitement in a front room on the top floor of a miserable tenement-house in Cherry street, on the morning of the publication of the particulars of the murder of Mrs. Beekman.

A ragged boy rushed into the room, out of breath and with a flushed face, exclaiming:

"Mother, Sharp Sam has gone an' murdered a woman. It's all in the papers."

"None of your lying," replied a woman, who was busy over a stove.

"It's the truth—the solemn truth," retorted the boy, in a disturbed and angry way. "Why, he's been 'rested an' locked up."

At this juncture another boy rushed in, equally excited with a paper in his hand.

"Mother! mother!" he cried. "I wouldn't sell this 'ere paper. It's got all 'bout Sharp Sam. Look for yerself."

The woman hastily caught hold of the paper, and the staring head-lines were enough to confirm the

information. She read for a few moments, and then exclaimed:

"Well, I say it's all a lie," throwing down the paper, and putting her hands on her hips.

"What's all the fuss 'bout, then?" demanded the oldest boy. "I never saw the people so quick to buy papers. I could have sold fifty more."

"I never will believe it—never—never," said Mrs. Miller, which was the name of the woman, as she took the corner of her apron and wiped her moistened eyes.

"I'll be sorry if they hang him," remarked the other boy. "Will we have to go and see 'em do it?"

"Hush such talk," cried Mrs. Miller.

"I'm sorry for Sam," said the oldest boy. "Why, he's lived with us a good while."

"Who is Sam, anyway?" asked the youngest boy, abruptly. "I've forgotten how he come to be livin' with us."

"Well, I'll tell you," returned Mrs. Miller. "Let me see, it's six years ago that one cold night I was going along by the Catherine Market, when I heard some one crying. It was very dark, and the wind was blowing strong from the north, and I did not like to stop; but somehow I couldn't get a step further, and stopped right there. Then I heard the cry again, off by the side of the Market. So I went up there, and, crouching among some barrels, I found a poor, shivering, crying boy. I asked him who he was, and he said he did know. I asked him who put him there, and he said a bad man. I raised him up and put part of my shawl around him, and brought him home. I was a poor woman, and had two children of my own, but, thank God, I had a warm heart in my bosom."

By this time Mrs. Miller and both of the boys were in tears.

"Who named him Sharp Sam?" asked the youngest boy.

"He never could tell anything about himself," continued Mrs. Miller. "All that he could remember was confused, and I do not know any more about him than I did the first night he came under my roof. Having no other name I called him Sam, and, after he grew older he was so shrewd that he finally got the name of Sharp Sam."

"He's been a good boy—he did not swear or chew," said the oldest son.

"I've always been poor, boys," said Mrs. Miller, as her eyes again filled with tears. "We've had to rough it, and sometimes to go hungry. But Sharp Sam has always tried to cheer me, and he has earned many a penny and dollar for me."

"Can't somebody get him out of prison?" asked the oldest boy, desperately.

"No," replied Mrs. Miller, mournfully. "We are poor."

Late in the day Mrs. Miller determined to go to the station-house, where Sam was then detained, and make an effort to see and comfort him. The result of it was that she was not allowed to see him, and she was herself held as a prisoner for some hours, until the officers became satisfied that she had no knowledge of the murder.

She next saw Sharp Sam in a very unexpected manner.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ARISTOCRATIC SCAMP.

STRANGE good fortune is sometimes the lot of evil-doers. It is often a mystery and discouragement to those who live uprightly.

Henry Beekman had been thus fortunate in several respects since he came to New York. He had secured a large sum of money, and, though he had committed a murder, no suspicion could attach to him. He was a stranger in the city, under an assumed name, and no one knew him as connected with the Beekman family. To his surprise a boy had been arrested for the crime, and, while it was evident from the boy's statement that he had witnessed the

flight from the house, still he could give no further information.

With certain forced letters of introduction which Beekman held, he had obtained admittance to the clubs, and was recognized as an acquaintance by some of the first gentlemen of the city.

The man had two distinct characters, and he was a perfect master in either of them.

He could appear the finished gentleman, with learned conversation, and the manners of society and travel.

At other times he was simply the cool, reckless villain ready with all the arts of crime.

At the clubs he was known as Edward Clark, an English gentleman of fortune.

He had magnificent bachelor apartments on the second floor of a house on Fifth avenue. Here we find him, just after he had finished a late breakfast.

"To-day," said Clark, as we will call him for the present, "I must make my call at Miss Sallie Worden's."

He picked his teeth, and looked admiringly about the room for a moment.

"By the way," he musingly continued, "that rescue of Miss Sallie was a romantic and funny affair. I went over toward the platform because I saw that these very girls were observing me in the window. I'm not backward when a pretty girl wants to flirt with me, but hang me if I expected such good luck as for one to fall right into my arms."

He smiled, and seemed very happy. Then his face clouded, and he remarked in a very low tone:

"I'm walking on the verge of a precipice, as I am now situated in New York. When I have spent in extravagant living all I got of that old woman's money, what then? These club men are wonderful quick-sighted, and quick-scented to run you down as an impostor as soon as the money begins to run low. I know them well."

His face grew dark, as if unpleasant recollections were passing through his mind.

Rising to his feet, he walked hastily two or three times across the apartment.

"I must follow up my adventure with this young lady," he said. "It's a pity, though, to deceive one so innocent and fair."

There was a tap on the door.

"Come in," he said.

A great change instantly took place in Clark. The sad, troubled expression passed from his countenance, and he looked smiling and self-possessed.

A servant entered, and handed him a card, at which he glanced, and said:

"Show the gentleman up."

"It is Bill Jacobs," he continued, as the servant left the room. "A deep and cunning villain, as I have already discovered."

The door again opened, and a man entered. He was of large size with very black hair and eyes. His dress was flashy in the extreme. Clark had made his acquaintance at a gambling-house.

The two shook hands, although there was a certain degree of dignity on the part of Clark, as if he did not admit his equality with the man, notwithstanding that he was a visitor in his apartments.

"Well," said Clark, throwing himself into a luxurious chair, close to the side of Jacobs, "what news have you?"

"The very best," returned the man, stroking his beard. "I think there's a chance for a big haul."

"Who is Sallie Worden's father? Have you found out, as I asked you to?"

"Yes, all about him. He is a millionaire, and dotes on his daughter."

"That suits a dot," cried Clark, slapping his knee with his hand.

"Play your points well," said the other with a confidential look, "and every one of us can get all we want from the old man."

"What is your plan?"

"Abduct the girl."

"That will require great courage and skill. Can't something less dangerous be thought of?"

"No; it is the best plan. We want a great deal of money, and that will bring it."

"What will I have to do?"

"Make love to her, and get her into the street, where some of my gang can seize her."

The servant now handed in a letter, saying:

"This letter was left at the door by a private servant."

Clark received it, and, after hastily reading it, said:

"All goes well. Mr. Worden writes to say that he would have called upon me to thank me for saving his daughter, but he has been detained at home by an attack of the gout. He wants me to call, so that he can thank me and place himself at my command. What do you think of that, Jacobs?"

"I think the whole thing will work splendid," replied the man, with a sinister smile. "You can do the genteel part, and my boys will do the rough work."

"She is lovely," cried Clark, "and I'm sorry for her; but the necessity for plenty of money on the part of a fast young man in New York, knows no law. Does it, Jacobs?"

Rubbing his big hands and smiling, Jacobs answered in the affirmative. Then they parted to meet at the gambling-house, to arrange further about the abduction.

CHAPTER VII.

SHARP SAM AND THE BURGLAR.

THE two inmates of the cell in the Tombs had been, after their own methods, studying the character of each other.

Tall Mike was a notorious man, who had lived a life of crime, but his intelligence was much above the average of his class. He quickly saw that Sharp Sam was no ordinary boy, but bright and shrewd beyond his years. Hence he had formed a plan to make him of service to the gang of criminals to which he belonged.

On the other hand, Sharp Sam, while he did not give as much deliberation to the subject as the other, had been quietly weighing the characteristics of his older companion. It should be remembered that Sam was not a bad boy morally, and he did not feel at all at his ease in the society of such a man as Tall Mike; but he was sharp enough to see that he must in no measure offend him, if he expected assistance in the effort to escape.

"How many crimes have you committed before this present charge?" asked Tall Mike, in a pleasant way.

"I've never committed any crime," replied Sharp Sam. "I've lived poor, but never wronged anybody."

"You're a sharp 'un—yes, you are. Well, I don't blame you. When you've got a good yarn, stick to it. Now, the first thing you know some of the newspaper reporters, who have been interviewin' you, will git up a stir of public sympathy for you. I say you're a sharp one. Ha, ha!"

Tall Mike laughed and chuckled as if the very idea of Sam's deception was most agreeable to him, but that he saw through it completely.

"But you said I could git out," said Sam, wishing to change the conversation without disputing any more about his own guilt.

"So I did."

"When, do you think?"

"Can't say. There's a good many things to be done. Before you go I want to tell you about my pals outside. You can go to 'em and they'll stand your friend, an' teach you a lot of things."

A flood of light broke upon Sam. He now comprehended that Tall Mike had an ulterior object in regard to him, and that this was really the reason of his friendliness.

"My pals," the burglar went on to say, "are men of high degree. Most all of 'em have served their

terms up the river, an' any of 'em can do big jobs. You'll like 'em—I know you will. Several are quite young fellers—boys we took as 'prentices—taught 'em the profession, an' made 'em fu'st-class cracksmen. Don't you think you would like to j'ine the gang?" asked Tall Mike.

"Where do they hold out?"

"Sometimes one place an' then another. When the cops run us too close we scatter, but we've got a den. No man who has not taken the death-oath, has ever entered it."

"The death-oath—what's that?" asked the boy, with staring eyes.

"To kill an' be killed for treachery. When you once j'ine there's no backin' out—no blabbin'. If you do then it's all up with you. Death comes quick an' sure."

"Would I have to take an oath?"

"Not at first. You'd wait until you had been some time in your 'prenticeship. Till they saw how you improved, took to the profession. Ah, my boy, I can tell you it takes a bold, brave man to be a first-class cracksmen."

As he thus spoke, Tall Mike looked about the cell, as if he wished to find a mirror in which to survey himself, as the best possible impersonation of the individual of which he spoke.

"After a while," said Tall Mike, resuming, "when you are put in some big job—to rob a bank, for instance—then you'd have to take an oath."

Sharp Sam listened in amazement.

"I've made you open your eyes," said Tall Mike, as the boy stood mute with astonishment. "Well you may. I wouldn't have told you, but I see you're a smart boy, an' I think you'll like to j'ine. I'll plan out an escape for you now that will set all New York a-talkin'."

CHAPTER VIII.

DRINKING SATAN'S HEALTH.

EDWARD CLARK set forth on his visit to the Worden mansion. As he walked up Fifth avenue he certainly presented a most attractive appearance.

He was slightly above the medium height, erect, and perfectly easy and graceful in his manners and movements. His head was finely shaped, and his face was handsome and intellectual.

Then his dress was faultless in every respect. Without being a coxcomb, he had great taste and fastidiousness about his garments.

Fifth avenue was at its gayest and most fashionable hour. The sidewalks on both sides were crowded with elegantly-dressed persons. Velvets and silks trailed upon the pavements, and dazzling beauties tripped along in the happiness of wealth.

At length Clark began to scan the numbers on the houses, and presently he said:

"No— Ah, this is the house."

Looking with a quick glance at the imposing exterior, he further remarked:

"It's quite a palace, as I expected. Well, well, I never in my life was in a better humor to enter a rich man's house."

He rung the bell, and a few moments later was seated in one of the parlors, waiting for the appearance of some member of the family.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, rapidly looking through the extended suit of rooms. "this Worden must be one of the biggest of the big-bugs of New York. I know something of paintings and statuary, and what I see here has cost a mint of money. The house is grand—its contents are magnificent, especially Miss Sallie."

The words had scarcely died upon his lips when a beautiful woman appeared at the doorway.

"Miss Sallie Worden," he said, rising and then bowing most profoundly.

"Mr. Clark—my rescuer—welcome."

Clark gazed upon her in rapture. He had not, by reason of the circumstances under which he had before seen her, recognized her beauty to be of the splendid type which it now proved to be.

She was a blonde. The delicacy of her complexion, the softness of her eyes, and, withal, her decided intellectuality, made her face worthy of more than a slight inspection.

Only a few words had been exchanged between them when Mr. and Mrs. Worden entered the parlor, and were introduced to Mr. Clark by their daughter.

"Mr. Clark," said Mr. Worden, in a hearty, bluff way, "we have heard all about your gallant and courageous conduct with our daughter. We thank you, as only loving parents can."

"Oh, sir," cried the mother, "it was most fortunate that you happened to stand where you did. Otherwise our dear child would have fallen on the pavement and probably been trampled to death."

Clark, with great inward self-satisfaction, bowed his repeated thanks to all this, and at the first opportunity said:

"Before I go further in this, to myself most happy acquaintance, may I ask you to read these letters of introduction from my friends?"

"All is quite right, I assure you, on the score of your introduction and social standing," said Mr. Worden. "Let me again say that both my wife and myself thank you from our hearts for the service you have done us, and if in any way I can discharge a small part of the obligation, pray command me."

"Sir," continued Clark, quite moved, "you overwhelm me. The service was nothing, and one word from your beautiful daughter repaid me in full."

"Mrs. Worden and myself," remarked Mr. Worden, "are about to take a ride in the Park. My gout has prevented me from going for some days. I suppose you would not care to join us, as my daughter is to remain at home and will entertain you."

"Either to go or to stay," said Clark, with an air of inimitable politeness, "would afford me great pleasure; but I feel that I am charmed to this spot by a fascination superior to any will of my own."

"Sir," said Mr. Worden, "you talk well. I will now leave you with my daughter, but on Sunday I shall expect you to dine with us. Can you do so?"

"I will do so with great pleasure."

"Then good-day. God bless you."

Mr. Worden shook Clark warmly by the hand, as did his wife, and both then withdrew.

"This is the greatest luck of my life," was the reflection of Clark, as he turned to try his arts with the daughter.

"Do you play and sing?" he asked.

"Yes, both."

"Will you favor me?"

"What kind of music do you like?"

"As I have traveled much in Europe," said Clark, "I have heard all kinds, and by the best artists of the day. But I think I can say that I love melody so well that I appreciate all music, without having a preference for any particular kind or style."

"I hesitate to exhibit my own poor talents before one who has heard so much, and I'm half-inclined to believe that you speak as you do because you do not know what kind I play," said Miss Worden.

"Not at all," replied Clark, smiling slightly. "Furthermore, as a judge of physiognomy, I dare to assert that such is your natural perseverance of character, that your talents in music, and in all other respects, are not to be designated by the term 'poor.'"

"Let me show you that you are not the judge that you think you are," and thus speaking, she advanced toward the grand piano, which stood in the parlor.

Miss Worden's performance, both instrumental and vocal, was very fine.

"You astonish me," said Clark, clapping his hands, after the close of a most brilliantly executed operatic selection. "Your natural talents are very great, and your education has been thorough."

"Praise from you," she said, looking intently into his face, "is praise indeed."

Then she performed other pieces, and all with marked brilliancy, even for her. She was happy, and she wished to please her listener.

"Now," he said, "try something simpler and tender. It is in such melodies that the heart often finds its greatest pleasure and comfort."

Drumming on the keys for a moment, she seemed to reflect, then she said:

"I recall one of that kind."

It was a simple, sentimental English ballad, but, as she warbled it, she threw into her voice an exquisite melody and pathos. At the close her utterance was tremulous with suppressed emotion.

"Why," cried Clark, "you melt me to tears—you will break my heart. The story is too, too sad; the music would melt a stone."

"You are tender-hearted, then."

"To sympathy, yes—to the shafts of Cupid, most vulnerable."

Now a little flirtation began. One word led to another, and each drew them nearer to absolute confessions of their personal feelings.

The acquaintance was romantic in all its aspects, and what was more natural than that two such people should not only talk, but confess their love. Miss Worden was infatuated, and she permitted herself to say more than she had ever confessed to any man before. Clark caught at these words, and he fanned, with consummate adroitness, the sparks into a flame.

At length he thought it polite to terminate his visit.

"On Sunday," he said, "I will dine with your father. Until that time, it will be an age of longing to bask again in the sunshine of your beauty and talents. Adieu."

He withdrew from the parlor, as if leaving the presence of a veritable queen.

"How noble—how sweet!" cried Miss Worden, as she hurried to her own apartments, filled with emotions of the most intense character.

"Satan is ruling my destiny magnificently," said Clark, as he turned down the avenue.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GILDED SNARE.

NEW YORK, like other great cities, has a great number of gambling-places. Though unlawful they are permitted to exist, without more than an occasional interference on the part of the police. They are located up-town and down-town, in fact in every quarter where they can be visited most conveniently by those who are addicted to the vice of gaming.

Men who live by crime are generally gamblers. Clark was one, and on the night after his interview with Sallie Worden he was present in a noted gaming establishment up-town.

These places are elegantly fitted up. When the splendid chandeliers are ablaze in the hours for play, and the flood of light pours down upon the carved and glistening furniture, the fine paintings, the mirrors and frescoes, the silver and glassware and the luxurious carpets, it is a scene of splendor which is not often exceeded. Rare wines and liquors, and the best of cigars are provided free. Then there are suppers, or collations, each night, of game and whatever is the rarest and most expensive in the market.

Thus it is that in the midst of all that is elegant and hospitable, the slaves of the gaming-table are lured to their destruction.

Clark's passion for gambling had, throughout his career, involved him in heavy losses. Still his infatuation continued, and he plunged into one crime after another, to obtain money, only to lose most of it at the gaming-table.

"Without the excitement of gaming," he often said, "life would be robbed of its greatest pleasure to me."

His playing was the admiration of all who saw it. On this night, he was seated at the faro table, with "chips," or little pieces of ivory representing a large sum of money, which he had paid for them.

The top of the table represented a "lay-out" of cards, and before the dealer was a small box, which contained the pack used in the playing. When the dealer said, "Gentlemen, make your game," each person placed the amount in chips where he proposed to play it. When this was all done, the dealer from his box, produced the winning card, and those who won received their stakes and winnings, and those who lost saw their stakes go to the "bank."

Clark played heavily, and he won. The other players looked at him admiringly, but enviously.

"What luck!" said one.

"He'll break the bank," added another.

"How cool he is."

"He's just the same when he loses."

Thus talked the other players, and some persons who were looking on.

At length a man came up and whispered a word in Clark's ear.

"One more bet," he said, "a big one, too, and then I'll stop for to-night."

Again he bet, and again he won.

Filling his pockets with the chips, he rose and said:

"To-morrow night the luck will likely be the other way. Then all this will go back whence it came."

Directly we find him in another part of the room, where he is in company with the man who had spoken to him at the table.

"Sorry to interrupt you, Clark," said the man, "but I haven't time to stay much longer."

"All right, my boy," replied Clark, in a particularly happy and jovial tone. "I had a great run of luck. I was in a fair way to break the bank, but I don't want to do it."

"Well," said the man, with a smile, "you've certainly hurt their pockets pretty well to-night."

Clark smiled and hummed a tune.

"Now to business," remarked the man, who was Bill Jacobs. "How do you get on with that girl?"

"Splendidly," returned Clark, drawing very close to Jacobs, in the corner of a window. "The road is already clear to a great success."

"Good!" said Jacobs, emphatically. "Our fellows have managed several abductions of children, and made heaps of money out of it. It requires nerve and adroitness to do it successfully, however, especially in the case of a grown person. Children are not so much trouble."

"From what I know of you, Jacobs," replied Clark "and from what you have told me about your associates, I am satisfied the thing can be managed, and a great sum of money made for all of us. Where is the hiding-place?"

"Over in Jersey," whispered Jacobs. "We have a house, and an old woman in charge of it, for such cases. It's a splendid place for the purpose; lonely—hid away, and the old woman is the smartest old thing in the world."

"All right. I can manage the girl. I'll engage to have her at any point where you think it best to seize her any day or night next week. Consult with your fellows—have the plan all worked out in detail, without regard to expense, and so there can be no chance for failure—and give me the particulars at this place two nights hence."

"Depend upon me to do all that you say."

"Now take a glass of champagne before you go," said Clark, rising.

The two plotters soon had foaming glasses in their hands, and Jacobs said:

"Here's to success."

Clark nodded, and they both tossed off the wine.

Then they hastily withdrew, and, on reaching the street, one went up the street, and the other in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER X.

A ROGUE'S RETREAT.

CLARK had not confined his acquaintanceship to the gentlemen at the club. With the ample knowledge of villainy and villains which he possessed, he

was not long in finding out the whereabouts of some of the most dangerous men of the city.

Jacobs was one whose acquaintance he had made, and this man was a member of the same gang of which Tall Mike had told Sharp Sam in the Tombs. By a singular circumstance, but one frequently observed in human affairs, the interests of Clark and Sharp Sam were drawing them together, though they knew it not.

Going to one of the avenues, the man Jacobs took a car. He rode a long distance up-town, and then he walked down a street for several blocks. Then he opened a wooden gate, and entered a yard, which had a small, dingy-looking house at the rear part of it. He gave a peculiar rap at the front door, and was immediately admitted. Acting as if he was acquainted with the place, he went to the back room on the same floor, to which he was also admitted, after another rap.

Two men and a woman were already here. On the table was a pitcher and glasses, with beer in them.

"You're late, Jacobs," said one of the men.

"My man was winning heavily at faro, so it was late before I could talk with him."

"Vell," asked a stout, ugly-looking man, after drinking off a glass of the beer, "did 'e talk business?"

"Plenty of it," replied Jacobs. "He's a fine fellow, seems to be a gentleman, but hang me if I don't think he's one of our own kind."

"What does he want?" asked the woman, a fat, uncouth creature, who was the wife of the man who first spoke.

"It's a big thing," returned Jacobs. "It will require skill and courage, but there's money in it."

"Lots of it, hey?" said the ugly man. "Count me in."

"What is it?" demanded the thoroughly curious woman. "Don't be holdin' in any longer."

"Why," said Jacobs, with much deliberation and importance, "the daughter of a Fifth avenue millionaire is to be abducted."

"Ducted," cried the ugly man, "that job suits me."

"Is it a child or a woman?" asked the woman.

"A woman," said Jacobs.

"I'd rather snap up a child," said the woman.

"Vell, I don't care vich it is," remarked the ugly man. "There's vays to manage any of 'em."

"Don't be too bold an' rash," said the woman.

"We're short handed now, 'cause you didn't take my advice. Tall Mike wouldn't be where he is if you had listened to me."

"Shut up! and drink your beer," said her husband, with a scowl.

The plan for the abduction was laid out in great detail, and those who were to take part in it were selected for their ability for the special work assigned to them.

"Now it's all understood," said Jacobs, at length.

"And the tracks are all covered," added Dick.

"We'll do it, slick an' sure," remarked the ugly man.

"I hope it will come out right," said the woman, "but you'll raise all New York with excitement."

"We'll bring out the dollars of that dotting father," replied Jacobs.

"I'm as sure of mine," said the ugly man, "as if I had 'em in my pocket."

The meeting now broke up, and Jacobs quietly left the house. The others all remained, and, in the course of a short time, several other men who belonged to the gang came into the house, and went to their rooms.

Dick and his wife claimed to keep a boarding-house for mechanics and other working people. The police knew that all this was only the cover for the real occupation of those who lived at the place. But it was Dick's "castle," under the law, and it was never invaded, except when a warrant was issued by a magistrate for some one living there who was charged with crime.

CHAPTER XI.

SALLIE WORDEN'S PERIL.

THE abduction of Sallie Worden was rendered less difficult by the fact that Clark was one of the chief agents in it, and by the other that she placed implicit confidence in him.

At the dinner on Sunday, he had been received with great hospitality and favor by all the family. The meal passed off with much spirit and pleasure on the part of all present, and Clark was especially brilliant and entertaining.

Before he left, he made an engagement with Miss Sallie to attend the Academy of Music on the next opera night. When he got back to his apartments, he seemed somewhat depressed. Dropping languidly into one of the easy-chairs, he muttered to himself:

"Fate—relentless fate—hurries me on. My heart grieves for that poor girl and her parents. What hours of suffering they must soon undergo. To be sure no real harm will come to her, but what a shock she will have. I wish it could be otherwise, but it cannot."

An opera night when there is a popular opera and company, and, especially, a favorite prima donna, is an affair of importance in New York.

The streets leading to the Academy of Music are noisy with the roll of carriages, bearing ladies and gentlemen, in full evening dress, to its brilliantly-lighted portals. In couples and in groups they go to their seats and boxes, chatting and happy. The ladies here first produce their newest fashions, and fairly blaze in costly gems.

In one of the most prominent boxes were Clark and Miss Worden. Her father and mother generally attended on such nights, but Mrs. Worden had been seized during the afternoon with a sudden indisposition.

Miss Worden was magnificently attired. She wore a new dress which had been imported for her from the most celebrated establishment in Paris. Her diamonds were magnificent and in profusion.

Clark looked at her with admiring eyes, and he also began a rapid calculation of the value of her adornments.

"Why," he mentally argued, "she wears the value of a small bank. When you steal her person, she conveniently carries off for you her most valuable possessions."

"You seem abstracted," said Miss Worden, turning to her companion, "and yet you have told me that you are fond of music. Certainly it is very fine to-night."

"Very fine," replied Clark, rousing himself, and somewhat annoyed that his inattention should have been noticed.

"When I come to the opera, I live in a new world. I dream—I feel perfectly happy," said Miss Worden.

"You are happy to-night, then?"

"Most happy! Oh, listen to that sweet duet."

There was a stillness came over the audience. Every one was anxious to catch every note of the splendid singing. Thus it continued until the close of the duet, when the house rung with applause, which could not be silenced until the *encore* was responded to by a repetition of a part of the duet.

The act now closed.

"Beautiful! beautiful!" exclaimed Miss Worden, applauding most earnestly.

"They are superb singers," said Clark, "but such an enthusiastic house as this would inspire any one."

Thus they chatted.

Miss Worden, however, observed that Clark seemed under some depression. Once she ventured to ask:

"Are you not well?"

"A slight headache—that is all," he replied, willing to have some excuse for his actions.

The fact was that he was passing an evening of torment instead of enjoyment. The very happiness which he saw around him only filled him the more with a sadness which he could not resist.

At this very time he knew that a terrible plot against the fair and interesting woman in his companionship was ready for execution. The machinery was in motion, the agents were in their places, and, as soon as the now quick-hastening hour should arrive, the plan would be carried out to the letter.

No wonder that he was abstracted and depressed under such circumstances as these. Schooled as he was in crime, and calm as he was naturally in his proceedings, he would have been more than human not to have felt some agitation now.

"The last act," said Miss Worden, as the curtain again rolled up. She noticed that Clark looked very pale, and she hastened to add: "I'm glad of it for your sake. The house is very warm, and you will feel better I hope in the cool air."

He smiled and thanked her for her consideration. Then he reflected in his own disturbed mind in this manner:

"Her kind words will drive me to distraction. Without knowing it she is literally pouring coals of fire upon my head. The *last act*, she says, and then the *first act* in a performance which she knows not of."

The opera was over.

Before the last sounds had died away the ladies began to throw on their elegant wraps, and there was now a slow movement toward the doors. The lights near the stage were next put out, and the musicians disappeared. As soon as the people reached the street, they hastened to the carriages in waiting, or to private carriages, which were called by the policemen, and rode off.

In the dense part of the crowd came Clark and Miss Worden. She was leaning upon his arm, and talking most gayly. He answered, but his thoughts were on another matter.

"To Delmonico's," said Clark, as he followed his companion into one of the carriages before the entrance.

"I had rather go home," urged Miss Worden, as Clark took his seat, and the vehicle drove off.

"Oh, no," he replied; "a little refreshment will do us no harm. We will not remain long."

But he had another object in this proceeding. On account of the presence of the police, in some force, in the neighborhood of the Academy, and the inspection of the hacks in line, the abduction could not be accomplished in that vicinity.

Reaching Delmonico's, then in Fourteenth street, they alighted and entered the place. In a short time, a man came to the coach, paid the charge, and dismissed it, saying:

"The gentleman and lady do not live far, and they'll walk home after supper."

Presently, however, an empty coach came to the same position, and waited.

This was a vehicle under the control of the gang engaged in the abduction scheme.

It was not a great while before Clark and Miss Worden appeared again. They advanced to the carriage. She stepped in, but at this instant a man came quickly from the other side, planted a blow on the head of Clark, knocking him down, and then jumped into the carriage, when it was driven off at full speed.

There was a half-smothered cry from within:

"Help!—h-e-l-p!"

Very few persons were in the street at this late hour, but one man, who was passing as Clark was regaining his feet, came up to him, and said:

"Did you call for help?"

"I did not."

"Thought I heard a cry. You are bleeding, sir. A little too much of Delmonico's good wine, I suppose. Glad you are not hurt by falling. Good-night."

Thus speaking the man went his way. Clark hastened away, also, for it was not his present desire to encounter a policeman.

He intended to report the affair, but he was anx-

ious to give his confederates as much time as possible. The blow which he received, not a severe one, however, was given to make it appear that the attack was made upon him, also.

Let us now follow the carriage. Driven at a speed as fast as was possible in the city, it took a course up avenues and through cross-streets, all the time going in the direction of the Hudson river at some point far up-town.

Inside, in a perfectly insensible condition, was Miss Worden, and on the seat by her side was our former acquaintance, Dick Lacy, one of the most brutal and desperate men of New York.

He had smothered her first outcry by choking her, and then he applied a handkerchief saturated with chloroform to her nostrils.

"There, my lady," he said, "you'll keep quiet now, I think, until we get you where your noise can't hurt us."

As they passed some of the street lamps, which threw their rays into the carriage, he gazed upon the inanimate form, and remarked:

"By jingo, she's a prize. Even in this little light I see her diamonds sparklin'. This will be a fine job for all on us if it's worked right."

The figure stirred and moaned.

"A little more chloroform," said Dick. The rough fellow held the handkerchief to the face of his victim for a very brief space. Then he began to remove the diamond earrings, saying:

"These here valuables I'd better take care of. It'll never do to trust her over at Kate's with all this jewelry on; no, I'll take it myself, and account for it to the boys."

Having obtained the earrings, he next got possession of a magnificent brooch, a necklace, ornaments in the hair, bracelets, and a number of rings. The quantity and the evident value astonished him.

Going down a lonely side street, the vehicle was driven to the end of a wharf on the Hudson river. As it stopped there was a low whistle given in a small boat just moving from under the dock, which the driver answered by another of the same kind.

The door of the carriage opened and Dick got out and went to the side of the wharf. He said, in a subdued voice:

"Up here, in a hurry, men. All right so far."

Three men then came up, and with the assistance of Dick, the still unconscious woman was taken out of the carriage and placed in the boat.

Then the boat was rapidly rowed out into the darkness of the river. Dick jumped into the carriage and it was driven away.

They plied their oars steadily.

"Ve are in a strong tide," said a person whom on another occasion we designated as "the ugly man."

"Yes, an' we must keep well up to fetch our land-in'," said another of the men.

"I've crossed too often," returned the ugly man, "to steer out of the va'. Pull hearty, now."

A low moan was heard.

"Listen to 'er."

"I vonder if she thinks 'erself in Fifth Avenue?"

"At the hopera to-night, an' now in this hopen little boat crossin' the river. My sakes, what a change fer 'er!"

"Goin' to see Black Kate, too. Ha, ha! what a gay time she's goin' to 'ave."

"But ve's to give 'er up?"

"Yes, when the ransom—a big one, too—is paid by her father."

Ten minutes later the boat grounded on an uninhabited part of the New Jersey shore. A covered wagon stood in a dark spot, under a slight bluff which bordered the water on one side.

The same kind of whistle heard at the New York wharf was made by the occupant of the wagon, and answered by one of the men in the boat.

When they raised Miss Worden she had revived a little, but before she could make a single exclamation she was securely gagged and bound. They hastened to put her in the wagon, which at once

started on its journey. The boat put off for the New York side after the crew had imbibed from a whisky bottle, which they had with them.

The eastern horizon was just showing the first signs of morning when the wagon reached a small, neglected-looking farm-house, which was the abode of Black Kate. Here Miss Worden was carried to a room in the second story, and left with the negress, who was now to be her keeper and persecutor.

CHAPTER XII.

A SNAKE IN THE GRASS.

AFTER delaying as much as possible in reaching Broadway and Union Square, Clark there called a passing cab and ordered the driver to take him to No. — Fifth avenue, Mr. Worden's residence. When he reached there and went up the stoop, the door was instantly opened by Mr. Worden himself, who said:

"My dear sir, it is very late."

"A strange thing has happened, sir," returned Clark, entering the vestibule.

For the first time Mr. Worden noticed that his daughter was not there.

"Where is my daughter?" he asked, in great alarm.

At this juncture Mrs. Worden rushed down-stairs, saying:

"Where is Sallie? Oh, God! what has happened?"

"Coming out of Delmonico's, I was knocked down when about to enter the coach, and Miss Sallie was driven away without me."

The mother gave a shrill scream and fainted. Mr. Worden staggered, too, as if he would fall, but recovered himself instantly, and gasped:

"This is terrible, sir. Have you notified the police?"

"No, sir, not yet. I thought it my duty to come here first with the intelligence."

"I will go with you, instantly. You have a vehicle at the door, I believe?"

"A cab, which I called in Union Square. It was fortunate I found one, for I was very faint, myself, from loss of blood."

"Are you seriously hurt?"

"I think not; but I am considerably bruised and weakened."

"Are you able to go with me?"

"Oh, yes. Let us start at once."

Clark well knew that by this time his confederates were past pursuit and discovery. Consequently he began to be as eager as he was before dilatory.

When Clark and Mr. Worden reached the police station of the precinct where the affair occurred, they caused a profound sensation. The sergeant in charge was dozing at the desk, but he tried to appear fully awake when the two presented themselves before him. Mr. Worden related the story of the abduction in a few words.

The sergeant listened attentively, opening his eyes wider and wider.

"This gentleman was knocked down in front of Delmonico's, and your daughter carried off in a carriage before his very eyes," said the officer.

"Yes," replied Mr. Worden. "What is to be done?"

"Well," continued the officer, "all I've got to say is that it is the boldest and biggest job ever attempted here in New York."

"What is to be done?" again asked Mr. Worden.

"Not much to-night. You see this thing has been all planned by men who know their business, and by this time they have disposed of the woman somewhere. We'll send out a general alarm, but the thing will have to be worked up by the detectives."

Clark, as he stood listening, was the picture of well-simulated anxiety. His face was pale and blood-stained, and it was also to be seen that his clothing was soiled from its contact with the pavement. Secretly, however, he was pleased with the opinion of the policeman that the abduction was a success.

"What kind of a man knocked you down?" asked the sergeant.

"It was too sudden for me to notice him at all," replied Clark.

"You couldn't identify him, then?"

"I could not."

"Well, I've all the particulars down on the blotter here, and I'll do all I can to-night. Both of you must go to head-quarters early to-morrow morning."

"My God! this is awful," broke out Mr. Worden, as great tears started to his eyes: "what may not have happened to my daughter before to-morrow morning?"

"You feel bad, as a father," said the officer, "but when such a well-concocted plan as this one has been boldly carried out, you can't get the clew in a minute. The officer on that post could not have seen it, or he'd have reported it before this. After the general alarm goes out, we may have some news."

"Do not spare men or money," said Mr. Worden. "Search the whole city, or country, if necessary."

"I do not think your daughter will be harmed," said the officer.

"You do not?" returned Mr. Worden, with a ray of hope in his face.

"No, sir. She has been stolen to make you pay a good round sum to get her back."

"I will pay it," said Mr. Worden.

All this conversation had been hurried, and did not occupy much time. Mr. Worden and Clark now withdrew to their cab, while the officer proceeded to his duties in connection with the affair.

When riding along, however, Mr. Worden remarked:

"Clark, I hope you will be able to be with me to-morrow."

"Nothing short of death shall prevent me from coming to you in the morning."

It was fortunate for Mr. Worden that he could not see the sinister smile which passed over the countenance of Clark, when he was thus addressing him.

After leaving Mr. Worden at his dwelling, Clark ordered the cab to leave him at his own place of abode. When he got to his apartments he at once looked at himself in the mirror and said:

"Lacy is a hard hitter. He made me see stars, if I did not see him; as I told the knowing police sergeant. 'By Saint Paul, the work goes bravely on,' as the wily Richard says, but he was a fool to some of us in these days. This abduction is a deep as well as a brilliant thing. I'll wash myself, and then go to bed."

He was not destined to sleep, however, for in the course of the next hour the reporters of the morning papers, who had obtained intelligence of the abduction, began to seek for particulars, or his "statement," as they called it. He was glad of this opportunity to put into the papers a version of the matter favorable to his own connection with it. Mr. Worden was also interviewed, but he could not say much, and the reporters went away to tell the astonished public, as they did the next morning, of the moaning and frantic mother in the Fifth avenue mansion, who was calling:

"My child!—my child!"

CHAPTER XIII.

SHARP SAM ON THE ALERT.

THE hurrying events connected with our other characters has withdrawn our attention from Sharp Sam for some days. He has not been idle, however, in regard to his own concerns.

Confinement began to wear upon him. Accustomed as he had been to the free air, and to run about the city, he grew pale and weak in the unwholesome atmosphere of the Tombs.

The only thing to cheer him was the prospect of making his escape. But it was no easy matter to get out of a prison like the Tombs. Many had tried it only to fail. A few brave and lucky men had managed it. Hence, the chances in favor of Sharp Sam were not sufficient to encourage him much.

"When am I to go?" he asked of Tall Mike on this morning.

"Well, as you're so anxious to leave my company," returned the other, smiling, "suppose we say to-night."

"To-night! Thank God!" exclaimed Sam.

"Hush—hush," said Tall Mike, "don't go on so. If you don't keep cool an' shady it'll be all up with you before you start. These prison chaps are awful sharp. They may know all about what we're goin' to do an' are only waitin' to nab you."

"What'll they do with me then?"

"Put you in a dark, strong cell below."

"I hope they won't get me."

"You've got a mighty lot of risks to run, an' if you're not true grit you're a goner, sure. Perhaps you'd better not try it."

"If I die in the 'tempt I'll go," said Sharp Sam.

Through the agency of Tall Mike, quite extensive preparations had been made for the escape of Sharp Sam. He knew just what tools and appliances were required, and he managed to have them all secretly brought into the prison by the persons who had visited him.

Lacy's wife came one day, and no one was more adroit than she in aiding in escapes. While she talked to Tall Mike she transferred to him a rope and a chisel.

A ladder had been made out of the rope which she had smuggled into the prison and cell. Fastened to the ends were hooks, also brought by her at another time—which readily caught into any crevice or projection. With the chisel the glass window had been broken and loosened, so that it could readily be removed. The ladder afforded the means of reaching the window from the inside of the cell, and it was to be the means of Sam's descent on the outside.

Tall Mike had worked skillfully and faithfully at this affair, using such caution that no one suspected what was going on, though the keepers sometimes came into the cell. Sharp Sam looked on in admiration, and, when he could, assisted with great zeal.

"I've no doubt that you'll git out of this cell," was now the remark of Tall Mike; "but what troubles me is how you'll git along after that. I've given you all the points, but I'm afraid you'll git frightened, an' give yourself away."

"Never," cried Sam. "I'll lay low 'bout the yard till I can shove into the street in some way."

"I've worked so hard and planned so much for you that it'll make me feel awful bad to hear that they've caught you ag'in," said Mike, with feeling.

Sam thought the day would never end. It seemed an age between each meal, and by the time the last was served he was very nervous and excited.

"Keep cool, Sam," was Mike's constant injunction.

"I wonder what kind of a night it'll be?" asked Sam.

"One of the keepers told me that it was rough weather outside. All the better for your trip. I hope it'll blow great guns, an' be as dark as pitch."

It was true that a severe storm had prevailed all day. At night it increased, and the whole sky was of an intense blackness.

When all was still in the prison, and the storm was raging at its height without, Sharp Sam prepared to escape through the cell window.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BOY IN A BARREL.

FIRST Tall Mike fastened the ladder and went up to the window. This fastening was accomplished by some irons which Mike had inserted in each side of the window. A candle made a light in the cell. Without noise he removed the glass, piece by piece.

"The fresh air smells good," he said, as the wind came through the opening, "I wish I could get my big body through. I'd be off, too."

He descended and began taking the pieces of glass out of his pocket.

"For my sake," he said, "you must take this with

you. Drop it quietly on the outside. I'm goin' to be mighty innocent of what you've done when they come in 'ere for an investigation."

"It looks to me," said Sharp Sam, "as if I'll have a tight squeeze up there."

"You'll tear your clothes an' likely your skin, but you won't mind it when you smell the fresh air."

"I'm ready," said Sam, as his face flushed with excitement.

"Well, my boy, good-by," said Tall Mike, in a voice which showed that he was moved.

"Good-by—good-by," returned Sam, seizing the hand of the other and crying outright.

"Remember all I've told you to do. Be smart, now, an' leave these walls behind you as quick as you can. Up with you."

Sharp Sam grasped the ladder and began to ascend it. Reaching the opening, he attempted to put his head through, but it seemed too large.

"It's all up," he whispered, looking back at Mike, who was intently watching him. "I can't get my head through."

"Push it through if you tear all the skin off," said Mike. "No foolin' now."

Sam made another effort, and this time succeeded.

"Good," muttered Mike.

Then the body of the boy went partly through very nicely.

"Haul up the ladder and drop it on the outside," directed Mike, in a very low tone.

This was done successfully.

"Now go down, an' I'll loosen the ladder an' let it go."

He accomplished this by standing on the bedstead. Stepping upon the floor again, he looked up and said:

"The kid's gone. I feel lonely already. What a stunnin' row they'll make in the mornin', when they find out what's been done. But I don't care."

Let us follow Sharp Sam. After the first shock of attempting to put his head through, he proceeded without regard to pain or anything else. He trembled violently, but not with fear.

Getting his head outside, he felt invigorated in a moment, and soon worked his body through by some eel-like contortions. Holding on with one hand, he pulled up the ladder with the other, and let it down on the outside of the wall. In a moment he had his legs through, and then he made his way to the ground.

The ladder dropped, and he rolled it up. He threw down the glass, which he had carried out rolled in some rags and fastened to one of his legs.

"Golly!" said the boy, "it's dark."

Looking about him, he could see the lights at the entrances of the male and female prisons, and in different parts of the yard, but all else was shrouded in gloom.

The boy began to advance, cautiously measuring each step.

"Now's my time to poke 'round," he muttered.

He groped along the wall for some time, when he said:

"Thunder! there's no end to the wall."

Just then he stepped upon something which gave way, and he fell into a hole. Putting his hand down to examine, he remarked:

"Why, I'm in a sewer-hole. The top has broken in with me. It's the place to put this 'ere ladder."

Pushing it as far back in the hole as he could, he said:

"That's all right. Who'd have thought I'd stumble on luck in that 'ere way?"

Moving along, he finally came to the end of the wall of the male prison, which he had been following.

"Now, what's a cove to do?" he said, as he stood irresolute. "I don't know nothin' 'bout this 'ere yard, except what Tall Mike has told me. I don't know where I am, or how to get out."

He looked up at the black clouds, and he turned

his eyes first in one direction and then in another in the yard. Then he held up his hand a short distance in front of him, but he could not see it.

"How very, very dark it is," he said. "I needn't hug this wet, cold wall in this 'ere way. Nobody could see me unless we run foul of one 'nother."

Thus emboldened, and at the same time growing accustomed to the darkness, he left the vicinity of the prison wall, and walked out into the yard.

"Now, if I could only find a small hole to creep through into the street, 'd be all right," were his further reflections. "But they don't build prisons or prison-yards with holes in 'em."

The rain had now ceased, and the heavy clouds were moving rapidly across the sky.

Next came signs of breaking day. In the prison-yard all was darkness, but the light was unmistakable in the upper regions above the walls.

"I must find some place to hide," said Sharp Sam, as he noticed the change that was coming on.

He went down the yard in the direction of a large double-door, which gives admission to vehicles when occasion requires it, from the Leonard street side. The prison occupies an entire block, and the entrance for prisoners and others is on this side, also.

Here he saw three covered barrels. Looking into them he found that two were filled with garbage, and the third was empty. Without a second thought he got into the empty one, saying:

"I'll sleep awhile in 'ere anyhow."

Sharp Sam was thoroughly exhausted, and in a few moments he was in a sound sleep. Notwithstanding the fact that peril surrounded him on every hand, it was impossible for him to resist the drowsy feeling that now overcame him.

Very early there came some keepers and opened the great door, and a wagon drove in as far as the three barrels. Several barrels, evidently empty, were taken out of the wagon, placed by the side of the others, and then, one after the other, these were lifted into the wagon.

"Dot's all right," said the man with the wagon.

"All right," repeated the keepers.

The horses started, and the wagon rattled through the door, and the keepers swung it shut, and barred and bolted it immediately.

By the greatest piece of good luck, Sharp Sam had been carried out of the prison-yard without any effort on his part. The keepers and driver supposed all the barrels to contain the garbage which was to be taken away, and they had been loaded on the wagon without the slightest inspection.

At the first movement Sharp Sam woke up.

"What now?" he muttered in his first alarm, and came very near putting his head out. Recovering himself, instantly, he kept very quiet, and crouched as low in the barrel as possible. During the time which elapsed until he heard the wagon start, and became aware that it was being driven through the doorway, he hardly dared to breathe. When the wagon turned up the street, still he did not know what to do in this sudden and favorable change of affairs. He finally determined to wait until the wagon stopped again, before he made any attempt to get out of his uncomfortable place of concealment.

"I'll give these chaps a scare," he said, half-smiling. "an' then run for liberty."

The next place where the wagon halted was at a hotel in Canal street, some streets from the Tombs.

While one of the men was occupied with the horses the other happened to turn his head and he saw the top of one of the barrels lifted a little. His eyes stared, as they never did before, and he exclaimed:

"Der teufel's got into dot garbage."

"You pig fool," returned the other man, "dot beer's in your head."

Sharp Sam again raised the cover of the barrel to view the surroundings before he jumped out. This time both men saw the movement.

"Mein Gott!"

"Dot's a ghost!"

The critical moment for Sam had arrived. Up he

rose from the barrel, and bounded out of it and down to the street before the astonished men could recover themselves.

"Dot poy ish not garbage," said one of the men.

"He ish a brisoner vrom de Tombs," added the other.

"Vell, vell, vat next?"

"Go in for de parrels, but don't tell nothin'. Dey might think ve helped de poy."

Meanwhile Sharp Sam was out of sight.

CHAPTER XV.

BLACK KATE'S "CRIB."

SALLIE WORDEN was still in the same second story room in Black Kate's house. But her appearance was very different from what it was when we last saw her splendidly-attired person.

Without any delay, Black Kate proceeded to disrobe her prisoner.

"Laws, chile," she said, "it ain't right to wear such fixin's here."

Sallie was still in a half-stupor. The effects of the chloroform were passing off, but it was leaving her in great physical distress, as well as lassitude.

"Where am I? Oh, I'm very sick!" were her faintly spoken words.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the old negress. "Whar is you? Not in de fine house where you was raised. Laws, no."

She began removing the costly articles of Miss Worden's attire. Their beauty fairly fascinated her, for she stopped repeatedly to examine them.

A few articles of the cheapest materials were put upon Miss Worden. The transformation was very great.

"Thar," said the negress. "Your own mother wouldn't know you. I could a'most pity you, but I won't."

A very sinister expression passed over the countenance of the negress. She compressed her lips and seemed excited.

"I hate—hate—hate rich people!" she exclaimed. "'Fore I became what I am, I asked 'em for bread, for shelter, but at every door I got a jawin'. Then I stole, and they put me in prison. Now I'm a devil, sure 'nough."

"Oh, I'm sick!" moaned the victim, stretched so pallid and helpless on the bed.

"They've chloroformed you 'most to death. Lacy done told me to take good care of you for de present. I must be doin' somethin' for you."

The negress left the room, locking the door behind her.

She was a woman of about fifty years of age, and of most forbidding appearance. She had small, pinched features and only one eye. Her complexion was of the most intense blackness, so that when she became leagued with the thieves, she was at once called "Black Kate."

Before the negress returned to the room Miss Worden opened her eyes and looked wildly about her.

"What place is this?" she asked. "I do not know the room. Oh, how sick—sick I am."

She closed her eyes and seemed utterly exhausted. In a few moments the key turned in the lock, and Black Kate came in, carrying a bottle and spoon.

Miss Worden started up in affright at the sight of the hideous creature, but instantly fell back again.

"De Lord sakes, missis! you can't git up," said Kate, not wishing to be too stern at first.

"Who are you?" whispered the sick woman.

"They allers calls me Black Kate."

"Do you live here?"

"Yes."

"Why am I here?"

"'Cause de men wanted you."

"The men—what men?"

"De gang."

As the conversation progressed, Miss Worden seemed to revive a little from the mere power of her determination to find out where she was. When she heard "men" and a "gang" mentioned, she raised

herself, as if she would have sprung out of bed. She exclaimed, wildly:

"Oh, good woman, tell me what you mean? What has happened? Let me think;" here she pressed her brow in thought. "I went to the opera last night."

"For sure," replied Kate. "Den dey kidnapped you."

"Kidnapped me?" repeated Miss Worden.

"Dat ar' de truth."

"What do they want with me?" demanded Miss Worden.

"Nuffin' 'cept to get money," said Kate. "Your father's rich, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Den he'll pay to get you back. You're gwine to stay with me till de boss o' de gang gets de money."

"I'll well pay you," said Miss Worden. "I have jewelry and rich clothing."

Kate laughed and replied:

"Laws a-mel you haven't a thing. We done took all dat 'fore you come to yourself."

"Do you rob people, too?" asked Miss Worden, with terror depicted in her face.

"Jest so," said the negress with a grin.

"Oh, show me mercy!" exclaimed Miss Worden.

"You are a woman, protect me—save me."

She clasped her hands, and looked up imploringly into the face of the negress.

"You rich folks don't show mercy," replied Kate, fiercely. "I went beggin' from door to door, an' nobody took pity on me. I hate—*hate* de rich, an' you belong to 'em."

Kate had worked herself into a passion, which made her face look more terrible than ever. Her eyes rolled and flashed, she wet her dry lips with her tongue, and she struck the bed with her clinched hands.

"Pears like I could tear you to pieces," she cried, glaring upon the frightened woman before her.

"Anyways, I'll shake you good."

Thus speaking, she caught hold of Miss Worden's shoulder, and shook her violently.

"Don't ask me for mercy," screamed Kate. "I only wish the boss would tell me to murder you. Thar, now, I feel better, an'—here she looked intently at Miss Worden—"you know me better."

Miss Worden was so shocked and overcome with the violence of action and language on the part of the negress, that she fell back pale and speechless.

"Now you take some o' dis medicine," said Kate, taking the bottle and spoon, which she had put on a table.

She poured it out, carefully.

"I doesn't want you should die jest yet. If you did, there'd be such swearin' I'd want to kill myself. Here, you swallow this."

She held out the spoon, but Miss Worden's eyes were closed, and she made no effort to take the medicine.

"No foolin'," cried Kate, angrily, "or I'll force it down."

Still there was no notice taken by the sufferer.

"Law sakes!" exclaimed Kate; "then I'll have to make you open your mouf."

Without further words she roughly raised Miss Worden in the bed, and forced the medicine down her throat.

The picture of these two females at this moment was something striking. Pale and sick as one of them was, her delicacy and beauty became even more apparent. Her long masses of hair fell over her shoulders, and the expression of her face was that of angelic suffering. The negress, in her anger, looked the impersonation of some fiend, who was equally hideous in person and in character. Her single eye glared wildly, and passion and malignity were made vivid in every line of her countenance.

The lamb was in the jaws of the wolf.

"There, now, it's down," cried Kate, allowing Miss Worden to fall back.

The medicine acted quickly, and Miss Worden opened her eyes.

"Will you send a note to my father?" asked Miss Worden, faintly.

"I ain't got nuffin' to do with sendin' notes. The boss will 'tend to dat."

"Has he written?" asked Miss Worden, with sudden hope.

"Dunno."

"Where is he?"

"In New York."

"Where is this place, then?"

"In New Jersey."

Miss Worden was in more astonishment than before. How it was possible for her to have been taken into New Jersey, when her last remembrance was of an evening at the opera, was more than she could understand.

"I suppose you'd like to eat somethin'," said Kate. "We never have much here, but we don't starve."

"I do not wish anything."

"Laws, don't you? I'm thinkin' you will 'fore long."

With a shrug of her shoulders, and a scowl, the negress now left the room, locking the door and taking out the key.

"My God—my God!" exclaimed Miss Worden, as the tears coursed themselves down her cheeks. "How could all this have happened? Where is Mr. Clark? Murdered, perhaps. Heavenly Father protect me now!"

She clasped her hands and closed her eyes, seemingly in prayer.

Meanwhile the negress went shuffling down-stairs. The house was a wooden structure and much out of repair. It had very little furniture, and both inside and outside presented a scene of neglect. There was a small piece of land connected with it, which was used for raising vegetables, this being the ostensible occupation of Black Kate and the man who lived in the house with her.

When Black Kate came down-stairs she found Pete, her assistant on the premises, in one of the rooms, looking at the clothing which she had taken from the person of Miss Worden.

"Dese yer things mighty fine," said the man. "Couldn't we hook suthin'?"

"You're jokin'," returned Kate.

"No, I ain't. De gang don't half pay us, anyways."

"Sure 'nough, Pete. I've been thinkin' of dat ar' myself."

"Dat ar' lace am worth a heap," continued Pete.

"Sart'in."

"The boss wouldn't know it if we hooked a little on it," said Pete.

"He's awful sharp," returned Kate, "an' allers 'spectin' on us."

"He'll say we've got some of it anyways. We'd as well make a dollar or two. Clip off some of dat lace, Kate."

"I'm gwine to, sure," replied the woman.

Taking out of her pocket a pair of scissors she ripped from the dress, in a way which would not be observed, a large piece of the lace.

"Now I'll put dese clothes right 'way," said Kate, as if fearful that she would be tempted to take something more. "Dis piece of lace you kin pawn when you take de next load o' vegetables."

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW SAM DODGES THE "COPS."

We left Sharp Sam running through the streets. Up one and down another, round corners and dodging obstructions—on he went. People looked at him, expecting to see him followed by a crowd for some misdeed, but no one seemed in pursuit. In fact, he soon began to realize that it would be more prudent not to attract attention by running at all. Just at this moment, a policeman came down a side street, right in Sam's path.

"What yer runnin' about?" he demanded.

"For exercise," cried Sam, as he darted off again.

"You're a thievin' young villain, I expect!" shouted the policeman, shaking his club. "I only wish I had been quick enough to get yer by the nape of the neck, I'd tuk you in."

Sam was out of sight before he had concluded. He now looked upon a policeman as a sort of natural enemy, and he dreaded to encounter them.

"I'll go to Cherry street, and see Mrs. Miller an' the boys," he said. "Wonder what they've been doin' all this time?"

Going at a rapid walk he wended his way in the direction of Cherry street, which is on the east side of the city. As he came to familiar streets, his face brightened somewhat, and he remarked:

"It seems to me a long time since I was 'ere last, but it ain't, nuther. Oh, 'ere's old Cherry, as dirty as ever."

Mrs. Miller was engaged in getting a breakfast ready for her boys.

"That 'ere codfish smells nice," she said, as she bent over her stove in the operation of cooking it. "They like boiled fresh cod any time of day."

Then there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," she said, in a pleasant voice.

The door opened, and Sharp Sam appeared.

"Sharp Sam!" exclaimed the woman, starting back and dropping the fork she had in her hand. "Have you be'n let out?"

"No," replied Sam, with a smile, as he closed the door. "I let myself out. How's your health, and how's the boys?"

"We're all well, thank God! But we've been awful cut up 'bout you. We wouldn't believe it."

"What?"

"Why, that you murdered and robbed that old woman. We couldn't think such a thing of you, Sharp Sam."

"I never did nothin', but I saw the man that did, an' I'm goin' to find him."

"Where is he, do you suppose?"

"I don't know, no more than the dead, but I'll find him if he's on top the earth. That'll clear me."

"So it would, and I hope you will find him," said Mrs. Miller, with much feeling. "He's a bad man to do what he has done, and then let a boy, like you, be put in prison for it."

"The boys are out sellin' papers, I suppose?" said Sam.

"Oh, yes," replied the mother, with some pride, "they're up early and at it every morning."

There was a noise on the stairs.

"That's 'em," said the mother. "Won't they be surprised?"

The door flew open, and the two boys rushed in.

"Every paper's gone," they cried.

Then they stood transfixed for a moment, gazing upon Sam.

"Sharp Sam!"

"Sam!"

Then the three rushed together, and embraced and kissed and wept. Mrs. Miller looked on with tears in her own eyes.

"Sam has escaped," whispered Mrs. Miller.

"Jolly!" cried one boy.

"I'm so glad," said the other.

"Did you break out of that 'ere strong prison?" asked the eldest boy, whose name was Charles.

"No," answered Sam, "a man in the cell helped me to get out of a window. See how I scratched my head in doin' it."

The boys looked at Sam in wonderment. He had been their playmate and friend, but now he stood before them a hero.

Mrs. Miller now thought of the breakfast, and it was not long before it stood upon the table. When the delighted sons and their mother, and the no less happy, for the moment, Sam, were gathered about the table, it was a scene touching to contemplate.

"Eat hearty, all, urged Mrs. Miller. "I didn't

know I'd have Sam to breakfast when I bought the fish last night."

"Then I was locked up fast and tight in the Tombs," returned Sam.

"Was it late when you got out?" asked Mrs. Miller.

"'Bout midnight when I squeezed through the window. Then I knocked 'bout the yard all night, and managed to get clear of that in a garbage-barrel. They carried me right out in the wagon."

"Wonderful!" cried Mrs. Miller.

"The policemen have been 'ere two or three times now," said the oldest boy.

"Mother was 'rested," added the youngest. "Oh, how we cried."

"I heard all 'bout that in the papers. I got 'em in the cell," replied Sharp Sam.

"What are you going to do?" again asked Mrs. Miller.

"Can't say," said Sam, mournfully, "I haven't made up my mind yet."

They had pretty well satisfied their appetites, but, with one accord, the meal was now finished. Mrs. Miller and Sam looked the most uneasy, but the boys clearly comprehended that there was danger impending for Sam.

"I'll die 'fore I'll go back to that 'ere prison," said Sam.

"Where *can* I put you?" said Mrs. Miller, in great tribulation. "If they come here they will search every place."

Sharp Sam was very uneasy. He got up and walked back and forth, with his hands thrust to the bottom of his pockets.

"I'm at my wits' end to know what to do for you, Sam," said the good-hearted woman. "I'd hide you anywhere here, and not care for the consequences to myself, but I know they'd find you."

"No, I can't stay here," replied Sam, with great tears starting in his eyes. "I must go, an' may never come back."

Here they all burst into violent crying. Mrs. Miller took her apron and covered her face, while her sons bent their heads upon the table, and cried as if their very hearts would break. Sam stood not far off, with his hands covering his face, and his body shaking with emotion.

To relieve her feelings, Mrs. Miller rose from her seat at the table, and went to the window. Her rooms were in front, but in the highest story. Looking down into the street, she saw that something unusual was going on. Then, putting her head out of the window, she saw that policemen were stationed at both ends of the block.

"Fly!" she cried; "the police are on the corners—the detectives will be here right away."

Thus speaking, she caught Sam in her embrace, which he returned most earnestly. Next Charles and Walter rushed up to Sam, and the whole room was filled with their lamentations.

"Go to the roof, and trust to God," said Mrs. Miller.

"Farewell, all," cried Sam, as he dashed in a half-bewildered way out of the room.

"Now, stop crying, boys," said Mrs. Miller, drying her own tears; "when the detectives come in here we mustn't know anything about Sam."

In less than three minutes there was first a loud knock on the door, and before an answer could be made, it was rudely opened and two men entered.

"Where is your boy?" demanded one.

"Which boy?" demanded Mrs. Miller, wishing to gain as much time as possible.

"Sharp Sam."

"Don't know."

"We'll see."

"Who are you?"

"Detectives."

They went hastily through the rooms, looking into closets and corners, turning up beds, and sounding for holes in the floor and walls.

"The youngster's gone," said one of the men; "but he's been here."

"Why do you think so?" asked the other.

"It's plain enough," was the reply. "Look on the table, there, four have been eating, and there are only three of 'em here now."

"That's a fact."

"He didn't go down."

"Let's go to the roof. If he took that way, we've got him, dead sure."

This remark caused a pang to the three interested listeners.

Leaving the room, the detectives went to the roof. It was a high, dizzy place. These tenement-houses are built five and six stories high, towering far above buildings of the ordinary size.

The officers looked for some time, but did not find the object of their search.

"It's strange where the young imp has gone to," said one of the officers. He couldn't have got out in front or rear for it's all guarded."

"Ha! what's that I see?" cried the other rushing to one of the chimneys.

In a moment Sharp Sam darted from behind the chimney, which he had all this time managed to keep between himself and the officers.

Now he was discovered, and the race for freedom began.

He darted first one way and then another.

"Surrender, you vagabond!" cried the officer nearest to him.

"Never!" said Sam.

Suddenly he ran to the rear gutter, crawled over it, and clutching the outside pipe began to descend.

So desperate was this resource of the boy that the officers, accustomed to thrilling scenes as they were, stood irresolute with alarm.

"He'll be dashed to pieces."

"The pipe is certain to give way."

Thus they spoke, as the brave boy continued to go down hand over hand.

"If he gets down, they'll nab him in the yard," now said one of the officers.

"Oh, he won't. If the pipe don't break his strength will give out."

Nearer and nearer to the ground came brave Sam, but it was a long distance.

At this juncture an officer appeared in the yard. It seemed as if nothing could save Sam.

"I believe he'll make the trip," said one of the officers on the roof. "It's the bravest thing I ever saw."

When Sam was a few feet from the ground a piece of the pipe gave way, and he fell with it in his hands. Rising up, he struck the officer in the yard with this missile, and dashed over a neighboring fence.

"Well," exclaimed one of the officers on the roof, excitedly, "that takes my time."

"Let's go down," said the other. "I'm not so sure of the capture of that 'ere boy."

They hastily descended.

"You didn't find him?" remarked Mrs. Miller, as they passed her door.

"Yes, we did," replied one of them; "but he's gone down by the gutter."

"Thank God!" exclaimed the woman, while her sons danced about her in delight.

They returned to the window, to watch events in the street. A great crowd of people filled the street, for the object of the visit of the police had circulated, far and near. Every window was crowded, and the greatest excitement prevailed throughout the largely populated neighborhood.

Reaching the other side of the fence Sam staggered and seemed ready to fall from absolute weakness. But it was only for an instant, for he knew that his pursuers were still near at hand.

Before him was the open door of a warehouse, of which there are many in that part of the city. Without hesitation he ran in here, and found himself in a long passageway between tiers of cotton bales.

Next he came to a smaller passage between the halls and, at the end of it, he saw a window.

"I'll go this 'ere way," he said, as he entered this small passage.

The window to his joy, opened upon a small yard, into which he jumped. Then he went into the cellar of another building, and, going in the direction of a light, he emerged into a side street.

The extraordinary means of escape taken by Sharp Sam had confused the police. At a distance, too, the guard was not so well kept up, for it was expected at these outposts that the arrests would be made in the tenement-house.

Consequently, when Sharp Sam reached this side street, he saw, in the distance, the policemen and a large number of people moving about, but there was no guard in this street in the direction of the river.

"Now's my chance," he said, taking in the situation at a glance.

Away he went, with the speed of the wind. Breathing hard, and holding his side from pain, he would not allow himself to stop, but ran with all the power left in him.

He glanced right and left, expecting every moment to encounter a policeman.

Providence, however, was on the side of the poor, hunted boy. He reached the river in safety, and ran down on one of the wharves.

Over the string-piece, and down one of the piles, went the boy. Then, like a hunted animal, he curled himself on the wet stones beneath the wharf, and said:

"Safe at last."

CHAPTER XVII.

\$50,000 FOR SALLIE!

THE day following Miss Worden's abduction had closed without the police gaining any information about her.

Mr. Worden was in the deepest apprehension of evil, and Mrs. Worden had been prostrated in bed since the intelligence was first conveyed to her.

Clark had been busy in the matter all day. The police did not suspect him, in any manner, with complicity in the affair, but were rather impressed with him as a gentleman.

Late in the day he drove to Mr. Worden's house. There he found that gentleman pacing the parlor and waiting for him.

"My dear sir, I regret to say that there is no news," said Clark.

"I have received an important letter," said Mr. Worden, excitedly.

"Indeed?"

"Yes, from the leader of the abductors."

"What does he say?"

"Read it for yourself."

Mr. Worden then handed a letter to Clark, which he opened and began to read. It ran as follows:

"New York, 18—.

"MR. WORDEN:—

"RESPECTED SIR:—We respect your feelings, as a father, too much to do any wrong to your daughter. She is in our hands, but safe from harm, if you do the right thing. We don't want her, but some money. You have plenty of it. You won't mind paying to get her back. We are poor men. Our price for her return is *fifty thousand dollars*. What do you say? Put your answer in the *Herald*, for

"SNAKE."

"It is a great relief to know that Miss Worden is unharmed," said Clark.

"I would not trust such wretches an hour," replied Mr. Worden.

"Oh, yes, you may," returned Clark. "This letter shows the whole plot. It is money, and not your daughter that these men want. While they are negotiating for that, she will not be molested."

"I will pay the money," said Mr. Worden.

A secret pleasure pervaded the bosom of Clark at this announcement, for a part of it was to come to him. He remarked:

"I supposed that you would do so."
"Please write an answer, and I will send it to the newspaper office."

"With pleasure."
Going with Mr. Worden to the library, he soon wrote off this:

"SNAKE:—Terms agreed to. Name time and place."
"W."

A servant was immediately sent to the newspaper office with the advertisement.

"Could we not arrange a trap for these villains?" said Mr. Worden.

"In what way?" asked Clark, carelessly.

"Why, have the police ready to apprehend whoever receives this money."

Clark affected to be reflecting on some plan to circumvent the kidnappers, but in reality he was preparing to drive this new and dangerous idea out of Mr. Worden's head.

"It seems to me," he said, at length, "that while such a plan might save your money, it might endanger your daughter."

The arrow struck in the tender heart of the father, where Clark intended it should lodge.

"Then we will do nothing of the kind," cried Mr. Worden, instantly. "I do not care for the money—oh, no! I would give the last dollar I have for the redemption of my dear child; but I thought it would be a blessed thing to catch these scoundrels."

"I advise good faith with them," said Clark, firmly.

"I owe it to your kindness in this sad matter to follow your counsel to the letter. I can never repay you for your considerate attentions and valuable assistance."

"Do not mention it," said Clark, with cool hypocrisy.

Was ever anything more strange than the circumstances which favored this man Clark in his plans? Acting a two-faced part, involved in a desperate piece of villainy himself, still here he was writing, by the direction of Mr. Worden, the answer to the letter of his confederates, and also using his influence to save them from arrest.

Having inquired, most sympathetically, about the condition of Mr. Worden, and given further assurances of the speedy and satisfactory termination of the whole trouble, Clark took his leave:

Seated in his cab, a few moments later, Clark ejaculated:

"Was ever a man so deceived? Ha! ha! ha!"

Next morning the advertisement appeared, but no further developments took place.

On the morning of the following day, Mr. Worden received another letter, in the same handwriting as the first, in these words:

"MR. WORDEN:—

"Sir:—We have seen your advertisement. At the same time, we know that the police are working in the case. Don't trifle with us. We are desperate men. Call off the police hounds. We must wait a bit. Can't trust you yet."
SNAKE."

Mr. Worden found himself in a dilemma. It was evident that these men had means of knowing what the police were doing, and it was now necessary that he should refrain from prompting them to any further efforts. On the other hand, it was quite impossible to admit the police to a knowledge of his own negotiations. At all events, he determined to reply to the letter, through the paper.

The next day this advertisement appeared:

"SNAKE:—Have no fear. All is confidential between us

Mr. Worden also had several interviews with the superintendent and detectives. While he did not dare to request a cessation of their investigations, he hinted that, possibly, if the men were not alarmed, overtures for some ransom might be made.

"Your object is to get back your daughter," said the superintendent, rather sharply, on hearing Mr.

Worden's expressions, "but we have a duty to discharge to the law and the community. A crime has been committed, and the perpetrators must be apprehended, if they can be found."

"A greater crime may be committed if my daughter is not rescued from the power of these men," replied Mr. Worden.

"We can neither consider that nor allow you to compound a felony, if we know it," returned the superintendent.

"Of course you must do your duty," said Mr. Worden, as he rose to conclude the interview.

As he went homeward he was exceedingly troubled. He foresaw that the deliverance of his daughter would now be exceedingly difficult. The abductors were wary, and the police would continue their efforts in all directions.

Next day Mr. Worden received a letter, in these words:

"MR. WORDEN:—

"Sir:—You went to the police too quick. Now they are keen on the scent. We can't move. Keep shady till you hear again."
SNAKE."

The fact was that Dick Lacy and several of his gang were under the suspicion of the police, and had been shadowed for a day or two. Hence their unwillingness to move in the matter, at present.

The delay and anxiety were terrible for both Mr. and Mrs. Worden. Their friends could not comfort them.

Clark, from his position with both parties, was well aware of the entire situation, and, prudently, determined to await events.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHARP SAM THE JOCKEY.

SHARP SAM slept long and soundly on his bed of rough stones under the wharf. Soon after reaching the place exhausted nature had asserted its prerogative, and the poor boy had fallen asleep, with his arm for a pillow. For the time all his troubles were forgotten, and it might even be supposed that he had some pleasant dream, for his face brightened and he looked happy. But the awakening with its terrors of renewed apprehensions, must come at last. It came when the rising tide reached the spot where he lay, and the cold water penetrated to his skin.

Then he rose up, and rubbed his eyes. It was night, and beneath the wharf, looking across the river, he could see the lights in the streets of Brooklyn.

"Golly, how I shiver," he said, "an' I'm all wet 'bout the feet and legs. The tide's up an' it's in the night. What a sleep I've had. I feel better for it, too. Night is a good time for me to put out of the city. Can't stay here."

He climbed up to the top of the wharf.

"I wish I had a few pennies to get some coffee and cakes," he said, as he reached the street. "I'm hungry."

He walked on some distance, shivering and uncomfortable. Then he espied a man carrying a valise. Going up to him, he said:

"Mister, let me carry your baggage."

"Well, I don't care, my lad, if ye do," returned the man, handing the article to Sam. "I'm in a hurry to get to the Catherine Ferry. When a man's been a long time away from his wife and little ones, he don't mind a trifle to get along faster. Heave ahead, my lad."

"As fast as you like, sir," said Sam, lifting the heavy valise to his shoulder and starting off briskly.

He was very glad when he reached the ferry gate, but he forgot all about his fatigue when he heard the man say:

"You're a smart lad. Here, I don't mind half a dollar."

"Thank you, captain," said Sam, with a bounding heart. "I'm off for some coffee and cakes."

The hungry boy was soon seated in one of the cel-

lars of that neighborhood, where they sell hot coffee and cakes at a low price.

As Sam was very hungry, and he felt quite rich with the sum of fifty cents in his pocket, he indulged in not only one cup of coffee and a plate of cakes, but he duplicated his order.

After he had appeased his hunger he went forth again. Up one street, then through another, and finally he came to an avenue where the horse-cars were running.

"I'll take a ride," he suddenly exclaimed. "It don't cost much."

He jumped on one of the passing cars, took a seat, and soon paid his fare. He had a nice corner, and he went to sleep. How long his nap continued he did not know, but he was finally aroused by the conductor shaking him roughly, and saying:

"Come, you can't get any more ride for your money."

"Where am I?" he demanded, rubbing his eyes.

"Harlem Bridge. Come, run home," answered the conductor.

He scampered out of the car, with a heavy heart. Not knowing or caring where he went, he pushed off in the direction of the bridge which he saw before him.

He wandered all night, determined to get as far from the city as possible by daylight.

"I'll get some work out 'ere where they won't think of lookin' for me," said Sam.

At dawn he threw himself, footsore and miserable, upon the ground outside of Jerome Park.

This place is the property of the New York Jockey Club, to which most of the rich horse owners of the city belong, and its Spring and Fall meetings are attended by great crowds of fashionable and other people. The stakes amount, in the aggregate, to a very large sum of money, and, consequently, all the prominent stables of race-horses are twice a year brought to the place.

Ample, and the very best accommodations for these valuable animals are provided. With them come a host of boy jockeys, trainers, and other stable attendants, so that for some time before the races, the Park, especially in the vicinity of the stables, is the scene of constant bustle and excitement.

Several of the most noted strings of horses came from the South and the attendants, in these cases, are negroes. The boys who ride are often very comical, not only in appearance, but in conversation.

On this morning, bright and early, the trainers had their horses out in different parts of the Park, for exercise, and to test their speed. At the stable doors, and in various positions on the ground, were the comical-looking jockeys, watching the proceedings, and making, in their own way, comments upon the movements of the magnificent racers.

"Hi!" cried a little gaunt negro boy, "that ar' Nancy's showin' her steps dis mornin'."

"Yo' won't get nuffin' out of her on de last mile," said another thin little black boy, in a tone of disparagement.

"What'll you bet on dat?" demanded the other.

"Go 'way, nigger," said the champion of Nancy. "t'ink dis chile bet wid yo'? Pay dat last bet fu'st—'spect I got some sense."

Then the whole of them began to whistle, sing and skylark with each other, looking and acting more like monkeys than human beings.

They turned somersets so fast that they looked like the spokes of moving wheels; they stood on their heads, and leaped one over the other.

In their sports chance brought them to the place where Sharp Sam was still lying asleep. Discovering him, through an opening in the fence, it took only a moment for them to bound into the road at his side.

"Hi, boy!" said one of them, shaking Sam, "yo' wake up. Sun up long 'go."

Sam opened his eyes, and when he saw the group of black faces over him cried out, in alarm:

"Devils, git out!"

"Debils," repeated another of the boys, "we ain't debils—we's jockeys. Haw, haw!"

"Haw, haw!"

"Ho, ho!"

Sam rose to his feet in a hurry at all this. He was still somewhat frightened at the strange-looking and acting group about him, but, after all, could hardly help laughing at their queer doings.

"Who's yo'?" asked the first speaker.

"A boy out of work."

"Any daddy an' mammy?" inquired another boy.

"No."

"Ken yo' ride a hoss?" again questioned the first boy.

"Do anythin'."

"Come up to de boss, den. He done told me he wantin' a white boy."

"I'll go," said Sam, with a brightening face.

The whole party now scampered off, entering the Park, and then going in the direction of the stables.

"Where do you come from?" asked Sam.

"From de Souf," answered a boy, at his side.

"Where's that?"

"Dat's Kentucky and 'Ginny."

"Is it a long way off?"

"Golly, yes, dat it am. Heap o' black people down dar an' fast hosses."

The jockeys now began to play pranks again. They wrestled, butted with their heads, danced, jumped, talked and laughed, until they fairly exhausted themselves. Sam laughed until his sides pained him.

Thus the merriment continued until the stables were reached. Sam was immediately interested in the fine horses he saw, some standing blanketed and others exercising. Going up to one of the animals, he patted him and said:

"I never touched a racer 'fore in my life."

"We rides 'em in de big races," said one of the little jockeys, proudly. "T'ousands of people in de Park lookin' on and cheerin' us."

"I wish I could ride a race," cried Sam, with enthusiasm.

"Yo' ken, if de boss takes a fancy dat ar' way. Dar he is now."

Sam saw a very plain-looking man coming out of one of the stables. He was old, and somewhat feeble, while his dress was common and shabby.

"Dat ar' man," said the boy, almost reverentially, "is ole John Harper, of Kentuck. He's got a splendid plantation down dar, an' owns de fastest race-horses in de world. Now, hold up yo' head an' answer like a man. Den yo' git de place."

The little jockey now introduced Sam, and the horse owner was very well satisfied with the answers made to his questions by the applicant for the vacant place.

"You're a poor white crittur," said the old man, "an' I'll give you a chance. Remember that a race-horse is suthin' more than a common horse. They're a heap smarter an' nobler than many men. I reckon you'll treat 'em well. Come with me an' I'll show you suthin' to do."

"Dat ar' boy got de place without much fussin'," said the jockey.

Then the whole party followed Mr. Harper and Sam.

CHAPTER XIX.

RACES AND FACES.

RACE DAY at Jerome Park is one of the fashionable events of New York life.

Within the Park the scene is beautiful and animating in the extreme. The Club House and Grand Stand, with their crowds of fashionably-dressed people, the vehicles of all kinds rolling along to places, and then, the curving race-track, and the stretch of green lawns and slopes, which, together, make up a rare picture of life and beauty.

Mr. Harper had one of the fastest horses in his

stable in the first race of this day. The negro boy who had taken the most interest in Sam was to ride the animal, as he had often done before with success, and Sam himself was allowed to go to the track, as one of the attendants. Sam was dressed in jockey costume, and in every way presented an improved appearance. Quite an intimacy had already grown up between the two boys, and when they were leaving the stable, Bob, the black boy, remarked:

"Don't yo' feel fine? Wouldn't know yo' for de same boy as we found dat ar' mornin'."

"I'm happy," said Sam.

"Haw, haw!" laughed Bob. "H'ar dem people cheer. They've cotched sight o' the racers."

The scene inspired Sam very much. He had never seen or imagined anything like it before. Then when he looked at himself in his gay clothing, and realized that he was personally to figure in the grand affair, he felt the first real sensation of pride which he had, probably, ever experienced.

"I'll win to-day, sure," said Bob. "I done bet a hull month's wages on my ridin' the winner."

"I ain't got nothin' to bet, as I only get victuals and clothes to start on," said Sam.

"Yo' can't 'joy a race without yo' bet. Why, up dar at de pool-sellin' dey go on like mad, an' on de Grand Stand de ladies bets gloves an' money, too."

By this time the weighing place had been reached. The jockeys were weighed, and the official record made by the proper person.

Very soon after this, the horses entered for the first race were placed in line, and the word to go was given.

A great cheer went up from the thousands, and there was a clapping of hands which ran along the brilliant row of ladies, as all saw that the start was a good one, and that the race had begun in earnest.

"Go it, Bob!" screamed Sam with all his breath.

"Hi, hi, hi!" shouted the negroes.

With their sleek coats shining in the sun, with necks elongated, and every physical power in its most perfect action, the racers sped onward. The little jockeys, some white and some black, clung to the horses as if themselves a part of the animals, while their bright-colored jackets and caps enabled the spectators to know, even in the furthest distance of the winning course, their respective positions.

Presently they were on the home stretch. The excitement on all sides was increasing. The people became wild. Men shouted until they had no voice for any further effort, and the ladies clapped their hands, waved their handkerchiefs, and seemed not less frantic than the others.

Panting and perspiring at every pore on came the racers. The jockeys on the horses shouted and whipped, for the crisis was at hand.

In a moment the heat was decided.

Then went up shouts and cheers which made the welkin ring.

"Bob has got the heat!" exclaimed Sam.

"See him bowin' to de people," said one of the other negro jockeys. "Dey lub de boy dat wins 'em money."

Soon the horses were off for the second heat.

About this time Sam turned his attention to the people on the Grand Stand more than he had before. Suddenly he seemed startled, and gazed fixedly at one place, and in fact, at one person.

"It is the murderer!" he exclaimed, excitedly.

In an instant he ran in the direction of the Grand Stand.

Unconscious that any such recognition of him had taken place, Clark, the murderer was in a prominent place on the Grand Stand, enjoying the race.

He saw the white and black jockeys, but he had no conception that one of them was the only being in the world who could recognize and identify him as the murderer of Mrs. Beekman.

Meanwhile the excited boy was trying to find his way to him. His purpose was to denounce him then and there as the perpetrator of the bloody deed.

But the hour for retribution had not yet come.

When the boy reached the entrance to the Grand Stand, he was stopped by a policeman.

"No jockeys allowed here," said the man, roughly.

Sam was so intent upon his purpose that he paid no attention, but attempted to run past the man. The next instant he was stretched out insensible from a blow of the club.

When he came to himself, he was in the stable. The races of the day were over, and the people had left the Park.

Bob had won the first race.

CHAPTER XX

POOR SALLIE!

MORE than a week had now elapsed since Miss Worden's abduction. Each day had been filled with terror and anxiety to her, in the upper room at Black Kate's, where she was still held as a prisoner.

As time wore on, she began to give up all hope of release. The negress did not improve in manners or temper, but constantly added indignity to the other distresses of the gentle-bred woman.

One morning Kate entered the room with a very meager breakfast, and said:

"Boss Lacy down-stairs, an' he's comin' up to see you."

"I don't want to see him," replied Miss Worden, in alarm, for she had long since been told who the man was, but had never seen him.

"Dat don't make no difference. He's mad, too, an' you're sure to kotch it. He says we have to feed you too long."

Miss Worden made no reply.

"Eat your breakfast," said Kate, "an' then de boss will come up. I'll be boun' he'll talk plain to you."

Thus speaking, she went away.

Miss Worden was very weak and sadly needed food, but with the prospect of a visit from Lacy before her, she found it impossible to eat anything.

She waited in much agitation.

Shortly Kate and Lacy entered the room.

"Good-mornin'," said Lacy, with a scowl. "I hope Black Kate treats you well."

"Oh, sir!" cried Miss Worden, in a sudden outburst which she could not control, "why am I not liberated?"

"Confound it," replied Lacy, "for half a dozen reasons. You know we ask money for your return, and we can't get hold of it."

"My father will surely pay it."

"He says he will, but the police are watchin' so infernal sharp that we can't get together. That's what the trouble is."

"Let me go, and I will pledge my life that you shall have the money."

"Boss," said Kate, "she thinks you is green."

"The best pledge, miss," replied Lacy, "is your own person. We've got it, an' intend to keep it."

"Not long," said Miss Worden, solemnly.

"As long as we please; who's to hinder, I'd like to know?"

"The good God above," replied Miss Worden, pointing upward. "I will soon die from grief and ill-treatment."

"Ill-treatment," repeated Kate, in a rage; "why, you ungrateful thing! You've fared like a lady here. Boss done told me to be gentle with you, an' I've most worn myself out waitin' on you."

"I suppose you have done as well as you know how," returned Miss Worden, "but your heart is not a kind one."

This remark was an imprudent one, but Miss Worden was so weak and agitated that for the moment she did not seem to care what she said.

"Oh, you wretch!" screamed the negress; "to say dat 'ar to my very face!"

"Silence, Kate," commanded Lacy; "you do as I tell you, an' never mind what she says. I want you to write a letter to your father," he added, addressing Miss Worden.

"Gladly will I do it," was her reply.

"We have been carrying on a correspondence with him. But the whole affair is difficult to arrange, and it is necessary for your father to exert whatever influence he has to get the police out of the way. We think that a letter from you will stir him up."

"I will write it."

"Here are pencil and paper," said Lacy, producing them. "Copy what is on this other piece of paper." He handed her a dirty slip with something written on it.

Miss Worden took the piece of paper and read aloud as follows:

"DEAR FATHER:—I am sick, and in great danger. If the money is not paid I will be murdered."

"YOUR DAUGHTER."

"Murdered," she repeated, looking up at Lacy with terror depicted in her own face.

"You might as well understand your case," said Lacy. "Dead men tell no tales—neither do women."

"Oh, God!—oh, God!" cried the terrified lady.

"Nothin' can help you," said Lacy, "but your father's money paid to us. If that fails to come before long then we must dispose of you."

"Ah, miss," broke in Kate, with one of her most sardonic grins, "I done told you dar was a rod in pickle for you. Now you believe it, I reckon."

"Write the letter," said Lacy.

The shocked and bewildered woman took the pencil and paper, and, through her almost blinding tears, wrote the terrible words. Then she fell back in a swoon.

"Ha, gal," said the negress, "you've got one breakin' in dis day."

Lacy took possession of the letter, saying:

"I'll send this to the old man by post."

Without the slightest further consideration for the insensible woman, the two left the room. Outside, Kate remarked:

"She's allers in dem spells. I'm tired of dat gal, anyhow."

"So am I an' the rest of the gang," returned Lacy. "We're sorry we went into this abduction business, at all."

"It makes a heap of trouble for me. Oh, how I hate dat ar' gal."

"You wouldn't mind puttin' her down cellar?"

"Boss, I wouldn't," said Kate, in a hoarse whisper. "Sometimes dar has been things done here dat made me sort o' sorry, but I ain't got no 'punctions' 'bout dat ar' gal."

"You hate your own sex?"

"I do! I do!" cried Kate; "'specially when dey 'long to de rich folks. Den I could kill—ki'll forever."

As the negress spoke, her eyes dilated, and her veins swelled like some angry animal.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PUZZLED GANG.

CONFUSION and alarm existed in Dick Lacy's gang. As the saying is, they found that they had an elephant on their hands. Desperate men, as they were, the possibility of their having to make way with the abducted woman was not at all pleasant to contemplate.

In this emergency, in which they found themselves placed, a meeting of the gang had been called at Lacy's house.

One by one they came to the room in which we have before seen them. Beer and pipes were on the table, and Dick's wife urged each, as he came in, to "Help yourse'f. an' treat in your turn."

The men looked surly and restless.

At length the room was full of men—desperate, bloodthirsty-looking fellows, every one of them. Some were quite young, too.

"Heard the news from the Sessions to-day?" said Dick Lacy, in a somewhat excited tone.

"No," said all.

"Tall Mike's gone up. Our lawyers couldn't save him."

"What did he get?" asked the man Jacobs.

"Ten years. There's no mercy for an old offender like him."

"Vas he much put out?" asked the ugly man.

"Yes, he was, I'm told," replied Lacy. "He thought he could prove an alibi."

"Dose don't go down, no more," said the ugly man.

"Well—well," said the woman, "I think Tall Mike is not the man he used to be. Look how that 'ere kid fooled him."

"Sure enough," said Jacobs.

"Why," continued the woman, "I took an awful lot of trouble to get the things in the Tombs to get that 'ere kid out, 'cause he was comin' to help us."

"An' he never came near us," said Lacy.

"Vell, I say that young 'un is the sharpest boy in New York," said the ugly man.

"So he is," was the general exclamation.

"I've some more news," said Lacy—"bad news, too. Ten more detectives have been put on the abduction case. The Superintendent says he'll find out who carried off the woman, or he'll arrest every suspected man in New York."

"I tried to keep you out of that sort of business," said the woman, with a significant nod of satisfaction. "It's none of my doings."

"Jacobs put us up to that job," returned Lacy, looking at that individual.

"It was a big thing," cried Jacobs. "Remember how splendidly it worked, with the assistance of the gentleman who first mentioned the job to me."

"That 'ere person you speak 'bout," cried the woman, "is struttin' 'bout town while we're tremblin'."

"Mark me," said Lacy, "if this thing does involve us—if the police hunt the game to our den, this man goes down with the rest."

"Wat's to be done, Lacy?" asked the ugly man. "I'm tired of this gabblin'."

"Well," returned the leader, with a troubled face, "the thing is how to get hold of that chap's money. My first plan was to have it paid to me in some way. The sum is a large one, and I didn't care to trust anybody else with it before the division."

"That's 'cordin' to the rules," said a member.

"When I was over the river," continued Lacy, "I made the young woman write a letter to her father. He's got it by this time, an' I'm sure it will stir him up. He won't care for the police or anythin' when he reads that letter. He'll be ready to plank the money down to anybody who'll take it and get his daughter for him."

"Vell, who's to get it for us?" asked the ugly man.

"I've a plan; I don't like it, but there is no other," returned Lacy.

"We must risk somethin'," said one.

"Let's get out of the scrape as soon as we can," advised another.

"Them's my sentiments," said Dick's wife.

"My idea is this," said Dick, seemingly much relieved that the gang were willing to let him have his way in the matter. "Jacobs must send a letter to the chap that's workin' with us, take the money an' keep it. I'll write to the old man to pay it over to him. Then we'll release the woman, and the detectives will quiet down."

"I'm in for that 'ere way," said a man leaning against the wall.

"So am I."

"An' I."

Each man gave his consent.

"All right, boys," said Lacy. "It's a big risk for us, but we've got to stand it. That fellow will have a good chance to play a trick on us, an' leave for par's unknown with the money, but we must trust him."

"He'll never live to get far," said the big man, striking the table with his fist.

"We'll never let up on him," cried the ugly man.

"You can trust him," said Jacobs.

"I hope you know what you are talkin' about," said the woman, looking at Jacobs, not in the most amiable manner. "I don't put much faith in your pinions any time."

Jacobs colored, but said nothing. The fact was that, next to Lacy, he was the most intelligent man in the gang, though he had not been a member of it very long. The affair in hand was of his planing, and he began to see that the gang were disposed to hold him responsible, if it resulted in failure.

"Two nights hence we will meet again," said Lacy. "By that time I will know the results."

The men left the room, one at a time. Some went up-stairs, and others cautiously withdrew from the house. Lacy and Jacobs talked together for some minutes, and then the latter took his departure.

"I'm goin' to bed," said the woman, yawning. "If there was more crackin' of cribs and less meetin' I'd sleep better."

After the men left Lacy hastily wrote to Mr. Worden in these words:

"MR. WORDEN:—

"Pay the money to your friend, Mr. Clark. We've notified him where to send it. Don't ask him any questions, and then you can't tell the police. Make haste. Can't wait any longer. SNAKE."

This letter was posted early in the morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

SHARP SAM, THE DETECTIVE.

SHARP SAM was filled with a great resolution.

It was to find the murderer.

He realized that he was a fugitive from justice, by reason of this man's crime, and not by any of his own. He had seen him so distinctly, that, now, he could recognize him anywhere.

Great was the surprise among the jockeys when Sam told them of his intention to go away.

"Thar now," cried Bob, "dar's gratitude for yo'. Got yo' good place, an' good clothes, an' now yo' gwine 'way."

"Dat ar' boy 'fraid to stay," said another of the boys. "Yo' keep 'way from de Grand Stand, an' yo' won't git clubbed."

"I've business in the city," urged Sam.

"What yo' come our har for den!" returned Bob.

"Didn't look much like business when yo' lay in de road out dar."

"Boys," said Sam, as his voice trembled and tears came in his eyes, "it does look bad for me to leave so soon. I don't want to do it, but I must."

"Dar now, don't cry," said Bob, not unmoved himself. "Yo're the fu'st white boy I've liked in de Norf."

"Dunno what yo' want to leave for. De boss likes yer ridin'," said another.

Mr. Harper himself now came into the stable.

"Glad you're 'bout ag'in," he remarked, pleasantly, to Sam.

"He's gwine 'way," said Bob.

"Poor crittur, he needn't," replied Mr. Harper.

"I don't blame him for goin' to the Grand Stand. He got a little excited with the races. I reckon. Don't wonder at it—git so myself, sometimes. He'll l'arn better 'fore long."

Sam now in a few words thanked Mr. Harper for his kindness, and stated that he intended to leave that day on his return to the city. Mr. Harper seemed surprised, and said:

"I was gwine to teach you a smart chance of things, an' take you to Kentucky. You won't find a better place than with me."

"Boy, I'd stay," urged Bob.

Sam shook his head to say no, for his heart was too full for him to speak.

"Well," said Mr. Harper, "you know your own business. I'll give you five dollars to help you 'long. Never lie or steal. I wish you well."

These kind words, and particularly the presenta-

tion of such a sum as five dollars, overwhelmed the tender-hearted boy.

"I'll always 'member you an' the boys," said Sam. "Thank 'e, sir, for the money. It's more'n I ever had in my life 'fore."

"You can leave the jockey suit," continued Mr. Harper, "but keep t'other one."

He shook hands with the boy, and walked out of the stable.

"I'll gib yo' half a dollar. I won a heap on dat ar' race," said Bob, presenting the money.

This started the other boys. Every one gave Sam something.

"Yo' take 'em, every cent," cried Bob; "dunno when yo'll come up with luck ag'in."

Sam felt the full truth of this remark.

With a sad heart he now bid good-by to the boys and hastened away.

He was uncertain as to his future plans when in the city. He thought that the police would hardly know him in his new suit of clothes. At all events he was determined to run even this risk, in the hope of finding the man he was in search of.

He did not even know his name. But his face was ever present before his vision.

"How jolly it is," he said, as he jogged along, "to feel some money in your pocket. If I could meet Mrs. Miller an' her boys, I'd stand treat for the whole lot of us."

When he reached the Central Park he was very weary.

"I like this 'ere place," said Sam, looking about admiringly, "'most as well as Jerome Park. It's bigger, but they don't 'low no racin'. I'll creep 'mong the bushes there an' take a nap."

After some time he was awakened by the sound of voices near him.

"I'm glad I woke up," he muttered, "they might have stolen my money. It's all right—I'll lay low an' hear what they say."

The locality was in the upper part of the Park, where there are groves and thickets favorable to the seclusion of any one who seeks it.

Two men had sought the spot, by different paths, and now were in earnest conversation.

They were Clark and the man Jacobs.

"You received my letter?" said Jacobs.

"I did, and am here according to your request," replied Clark.

"There is time for only a few words," remarked the first speaker; "Lacy, as I mentioned in the letter, is willing for you to receive the money. Now, my plan is for you to take it, divide it with me, and then both of us will leave the country."

"I will do so," returned Clark. "I cannot carry out any more of these things in New York, and I'm ready to divide, and leave for other scenes and adventures."

"Will Mr. Worden pay the money to you?"

"At any time, if I can promise him that his daughter will be restored to him. Poor old man, he is nearly heart-broken. I never go into that grand Fifth avenue house of his without feeling as if there was a corpse in it."

"Where is it?"

"It's that fine house near — street. By the way, whereabouts in New Jersey is Black Kate's, where Miss Worden is secreted?"

"It is in the country, three miles from Hoboken. She's been locked up in a room over there ever since the night of her abduction."

"Poor thing. Under other circumstances I could have loved her."

"Can you meet me in the Park, to-morrow? We can dodge the detectives up here."

Then the men separated.

During the conversation Sam had been afraid to move. Once he attempted to obtain a view of them, but the dry bushes near him made such a noise that he did not again attempt it. When they went away he caught sight of the back of one of them, but the other was hidden by trees.

Running out to one of the paths he could not see them in any direction. In fact, ever since he had comprehended the conversation he had been a great deal excited and bewildered.

"Here's a go," he cried, collecting his senses. "I've heard of that 'ducted woman. These are the fellows the police are after. But I didn't dare to call no police. They might have lugged me down to the old Tombs ag'in."

He reflected for a few moments, and then expressed himself in this fashion:

"I didn't 'rest 'em, but I can git ahead of 'em. I'll go to Mr. Worden, the Fifth avenue gentleman, an' tell him what I've heard. Who knows but what he'll do somethin' for me in return? I'll take the cars down. I don't mind payin' when I'm flush."

Sam was soon on the Seventh avenue cars, which took him down Broadway to a corner not far from Mr. Worden's house.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HURRAH FOR SAM!

SHARP SAM rung the door-bell at the big house on Fifth avenue very timidly.

The door opened, and a stiff-looking man-servant appeared.

"Does Mr. Worden live here?" asked the boy, in a low tone.

"Yes—what do you want?" was the sharp reply.

"I want to see Mr. Worden, please, sir."

"You can't. Tell me your business."

"I must see him. I've important news."

"I believe you to be some sneak thief," said the servant, angrily. "Be off with you, before I call the police."

"What's the trouble, John?" asked a voice in the house.

"It's a rough-looking boy, sir. I think he's a thief," replied the servant.

"What does he say?"

"He wants to tell you something. It's only a lie to get in, sir."

"In a moment a gentleman came running to the door, saying.

"Let me see him. Perhaps he has news of my daughter."

"So I have," cried Sam.

"Come in, my boy—come in," said the master of the mansion.

The great carved door swung open.

"Now, my boy," said Mr. Worden, as soon as they were alone in the parlor, "what is it?"

"Has your daughter been 'ducted?" asked Sam.

"She has."

"I know the fellows who did it."

"Great God!—can it be possible?"

"I was up in the Central Park, you know. I fell asleep up there in the bushes, an' two men woke me up talkin' 'bout gettin' your money."

"Did they say where my daughter was secreted?" asked Mr. Worden, in great agitation.

"Yes, they did."

"Where?"

"At Black Kate's."

"Where does she live?"

"In New Jersey—three miles from Hoboken. That's what one o' 'em said to the other man."

"Thank God for this information," said Mr. Worden, clasping the boy to him. "Where do you live?"

"Nowhere in particular," said Sam. "I've jest come to town."

"Then stay with me."

"What! in this 'ere fine house?" exclaimed Sam, in wonderment.

"Certainly. If I find my daughter, I will owe much to you. You have found out what has puzzled all the police of New York."

"Are you goin' after her?"

"This very night."

"Can't I go?"

"Yes."

Mr. Worden then summoned John again,

"Give this boy something to eat—treat him well in every respect. He has brought me information of my daughter. Order my carriage to the door. Now I must go with this intelligence to my poor wife."

He left the room.

"Young sir, at your service," said the man, bowing to Sam. "Excuse me for not letting you in sooner. Walk to the dining-room."

Sam was in a dream.

"Golly!" he said to himself, "this 'ere beats that fairy story Mrs. Miller once read to me."

When he saw the splendid dining-room, with beautiful silver and glassware on the table, he was again quite dazzled. He hung back.

"Be seated, young sir," said John. "How would you like some quail on toast?"

"Oh, I'm fond of that," cried Sam, regaining his self-possession. "I'm blamed if I know what it is," he added, in an undertone.

In a short time Sam was engaged in eating such a meal as he had never seen in his life before.

"Have you had plenty?" asked John, as Sam gave up what seemed to be an attempt to eat everything on the table.

"I'm chock-full," replied the boy. "It's a bully feed. You live well here."

The carriage was now ready.

Mr. Worden told Sam to get in, and then said to the coachman:

"Drive to the police station."

Sam heard this, and bounded out of the vehicle.

"Are you goin' to 'rest me?" he demanded, in alarm.

"No, no," said Mr. Worden, in a reassuring tone.

"You have nothing to fear from the police. I want an officer to go to New Jersey with me."

Sam knew, on the contrary, that he had cause to fear the police, but became satisfied with Mr. Worden's explanation, and returned to the carriage.

"No harm shall come to you, my boy," said Mr. Worden.

"I hope not," replied Sam, earnestly.

When he reflected that he was going to a police station, he felt considerably troubled, but he saw no way to avoid it now, without running away from a man who had promised to befriend him.

At the station-house an officer was obtained, and the carriage then started for Hoboken. Stopping at a police station in that city, they obtained the services of another officer.

The roads were dark, and in a bad condition. Still, by order of Mr. Worden, the horses were urged to their utmost exertions.

"What do you know about this Black Kate's place?" asked Mr. Worden of the Hoboken officer.

"Nothing," he replied. "Our attention has never been called to it. It is on a lonely road, and is not much noticed by anybody."

"I think," said the New York officer, "that we are about to make great discoveries. For some days, I have understood, the detectives on our side have become convinced that the Lacy gang are in some deep job. As Miss Worden is secreted in this out-of-the-way place, it must be a thieves' den."

Let us anticipate the arrival of the carriage at Black Kate's for a brief period.

"You, Kate," called the negro, who lived with her on the place.

"What you want?" asked Kate, surlily.

"I've got some barrels to get out of dat ar' cellar, an' I ain't gwine down dar 'lone."

"What you 'feard 'bout?"

"You knows. It's bad 'nough to go dar in de day-time, let 'lone in de night."

The two went down in a timid manner, both with candles in their hands.

"How it smells," said the man.

"Kind'r like a graveyard," returned Kate.

"It am dat ar'. How many dem we put down har—I 'most forget?"

"Three big an' one little one."

The man put down his candle and began to move

some empty barrels. Whenever one of them made much noise he became startled with fear.

"Kate, do de dead rise at night?" asked the man.

Before Kate could answer, the sound of voices was heard outside of the house.

"What's dat?" cried Kate, in alarm.

"Nobody wants any good dis time o' night. 'Haps it ghosts come for t'others."

The man made a step, and in so doing his candle was thrown down and extinguished. In trying to catch it, Kate put out her own, and the result was total darkness in the cellar.

"Lord help us!" screamed the woman.

"De ghosts am risin'," cried the man.

Both attempted to rush out of the cellar, but stumbled and fell over each other. They struggled together in the dark.

"Ghost, let me up," cried the man.

"Lord! Lord!" shouted Kate, "I'll pray arter dis."

Now there was a loud knocking at the door.

"H'ar dat," moaned the man, "ghosts at de door, an' ghosts in de cellar. Day o' judgment come."

By this time, after falling several times more, the two reached the stairs. Up these they fled, and reached the upper hall just as the front door was burst in by some persons outside.

"Stop dat," cried Kate, recovering herself, as she saw a party of men entering. "How dar' you break dat door?"

"We are officers of the law," said the foremost man.

"Officers of de law!" cried Kate, in astonishment.

"Dem's wuss'n ghosts," said the negro man.

"You have a lady imprisoned here," said the same officer.

"How you knows dat?" demanded Kate, now determined to parley a little. "Dis place is whar we raised vegetables for de market."

"That game is played out," answered the other officer. "Where is the lady?"

"I ain't gwine to tell you," returned Kate, insolently.

"You hold these two worthies," said the Hoboken officer to the other, "and I'll soon search the house. Come on, Mr. Worden."

First they went through some of the lower rooms, but they were not occupied. Then they passed through one up-stairs, and then came to another, which was locked.

In an instant the door was forced, and father and daughter were in each other's embrace.

"Father! father!" she cried.

"Saved at last!" he murmured, as he folded her again and again to his heart.

"Bully!" said Sam, as he wiped his streaming eyes.

Before daylight Miss Worden was in her own bed at home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A VILLAIN UNMASKED.

THE hour for the unmasking of Clark was now at hand. His course of villainy, as shrewd and successful as it had been, was about to close.

The night before he had called at Mr. Worden's, and, very much to his surprise, found that he was absent.

"Never mind," he said, as he turned from the door, without further explanations. "I will call early in the morning."

He came and was ushered into the parlor, where he had been so often before.

"Now," he said, "I must play my points nicely. Before I leave, the check for fifty thousand dollars must be in my hands."

Mr. Worden entered, with a beaming face. He looked many years younger, and, for the first time since his daughter's abduction, he was smiling.

"Why, sir," exclaimed Clark, "you look like a new man this morning. What has occurred?"

"My daughter is found."

Had a cannon gone off, then and there, Clark could not have given more of a start.

"Found!" he mechanically repeated.

"Yes, sir, and not only that, but she is now in this house."

Clark turned pale and then red; he staggered, and seemed about to fall.

"Oh, my dear sir," cried Mr. Worden, "I did not think you would feel the joyful surprise so deeply. Compose yourself, and I will tell you how it came about. It was a pure piece of good providence, and nothing else."

"Do tell me," returned Clark. "Really, really, I am quite overcome."

"Why, sir, a poor boy asleep in the Central Park overheard the conversation of two men, who were engaged in the affair, and with two police officers, I went over to New Jersey, and rescued my daughter. Important arrests will be made to-day."

The very earth seemed to be dissolving under the feet of the now foiled villain. His plans and hopes were scattered in a moment, and still more direful calamity seemed impending.

He choked and he could not speak. He grew dizzy and reeled to the mantle-piece for support.

"Oh, my dear, dear sir," cried Mr. Worden, in a great deal of sympathy, "this is too much good news at one time. You must be unwell this morning."

"Yes, yes," gasped Clark; "I am—unwell."

It was some moments before he could control himself. Then he remarked:

"I congratulate you, Mr. Worden. How is the lady?"

"Oh, she was treated most infamously. Given up to an old negress to be insulted and starved. Think of that, sir, for my tenderly-brought-up daughter. Sir, I am determined to bring every one of these scoundrels to justice."

Clark grew very pale, but made no reply.

"The officers," continued Mr. Worden, "made many important discoveries at the den in New Jersey. The whole thing will now be traced out, and not a man of them shall escape."

After Sharp Sam had eaten his breakfast at Mr. Worden's, he began to roam about the house, in wonderment of everything he saw. He went through the rooms, examined the furniture and ornaments, and was greatly amused and absorbed.

"It's a high old place," he said. "Why, it beats the museum."

Just at the last remark of Mr. Worden, Sam came along the hall, and, hearing voices looked into the parlor.

One glance was sufficient.

"Murderer!" he exclaimed, rushing in and grasping Clark by the arm.

"Why, Sam—Sam," cried Mr. Worden, in astonishment; "what do you mean? This gentleman is one of my friends, Mr. Clark."

"He is a murderer," screamed Sam, "and a robber!"

Mr. Worden looked thunderstruck. Clark, in a bewildered way, said:

"What a queer boy. Little fellow, take your hands off."

"Never," answered Sam, "till I hand you over to the police."

The door-bell rung.

Two men entered the parlor.

"My God!—detectives!" said Clark, in a low tone.

One of the men walked up to Clark, and said:

"You are Clark. I have a warrant for your arrest."

"What does this mean?" demanded Mr. Worden.

"It has been discovered," said the officer, "that this man, who has been acting as your friend, was himself a party to the abduction of your daughter."

"Can it be possible?" cried Mr. Worden, pale with mingled astonishment and exasperation. "Why, he was her escort on the night of the abduction."

"He is not what he seems," said the detective.

"We expect to know more about him in the course of the day, but we already have sufficient to cause his arrest."

"He is a murderer and robber," spoke up Sam. "I'm 'dicted for his crimes."

"Who are you?" asked both the officers, in a breath.

"I'm Sharp Sam, who got out of the Tombs."

"Hello!" exclaimed one of the officers, "this is getting to be a big thing."

Before another word was said the other officer slipped handcuffs on Sam.

He began to cry, and said:

"I didn't do nothin'. That's the fellow—take him."

"So we will," said the officer, and in another moment the irons were on the wrists of Clark.

A sickly pallor overspread his face, and he said:

"You must do your duty, but there must be a mistake."

"No mistake at all," returned one of the officers. "We have your confederate, Jacobs, and he has already told the whole story."

"Then the jig is up," replied Clark.

"You bet," said the officer.

Mr. Worden hardly knew what to say or do. Such revelations and changes had taken place that he hardly realized his own existence.

At last, however, he caught sight of Sam, manacled and in tears.

"My boy," he said, "what do you mean by what you say about the man?"

"I mean," replied Sam, "that I saw him run out of the house where that 'ere woman was murdered. They caught me, but he's the one who did it. Oh, Mr. Worden, save me!"

"I will, my boy—I will," said Mr. Worden, patting him on the head. "I'll immediately see the District Attorney, and no harm shall come to you."

"Thank you," said Sam. "Don't let 'em put me in a cell with Tall Mike; he'd kill me for not goin' to his gang."

"He's gone to the State prison," said one of the detectives.

"Glad of it," returned Sam. "He did a good turn for me, though."

Clark stood the picture of distress and humiliation. His head hung upon his breast, and he breathed painfully.

"You, sir, have played a pretty part," said Mr. Worden. "Your letters of introduction must be forged."

"Of course they are," said one of the officers, laughing.

"He has played it off nicely," said the other officer. "A visitor at the clubs, and in the best New York society."

"Going with gamblers and thieves at the same time," joined in the first officer.

"Murderin' and robbin', too!" exclaimed Sam.

It was more than Clark could bear. Suddenly he raised his head, and said, bitterly:

"Mock me, if you please. Circumstances are against me, I confess, but every man is innocent until he is *proved* guilty."

"There'll be proof enough," said one of the officers. "Don't fret about that."

The two officers and their prisoners rode away in a carriage. Mr. Worden, in his own carriage, started to have an interview with the District Attorney about Sam.

"I will go his bail whenever they'll let me," he said.

CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. MILLER'S GOOD FORTUNE.

MRS. MILLER and her sons were greatly rejoiced at the final escape of Sharp Sam from the police. The papers of the next day informed them that the strictest search for the boy had been fruitless.

"Where do you think he has gone?" asked Charles, of his mother,

"Can't say," she replied. "Perhaps he'll go on board of a ship, and sail to some foreign country."

"Like my father did," said the boy, heedlessly.

Mrs. Miller placed her hand on her bosom, and said:

"What do you talk that way for? I've told you never to bring up your father's name."

"Why not?" asked the smallest boy, "other boys talk 'bout their fathers."

Mrs. Miller bit her lip, and looked troubled.

"I wish I could hear more 'bout my father," persisted the boy. "Is he dead?"

"Well, I will tell you, Walter," said Mrs. Miller, "you are old enough now to understand the sad—sad story."

"Is it a story?" asked Walter, innocently.

"It's what father did—can't you understand?" said Charles, rebukingly.

"Your father," said Mrs. Miller, looking with tearful eyes upon her sons, "followed the sea. He went away one morning, and never came back."

"How did you find out 'bout him afterward?" inquired Charles, with great interest.

"I went to one of the offices where they ship sailors, and they told me that he had shipped as one of the crew of a ship bound to China."

"I've studied 'bout China," said Charles, "it's on the other side of the world."

"You don't say so," cried Walter. "Couldn't we dig down to 'em?"

"No, Walter," replied Mrs. Miller, with a smile. "When you study, like Charles has, you'll know all about China."

"I'd like to go there and find my father. It would be a good thing to have a father here. He could work for us."

"Oh, you talk too much, Walter," said the older boy. "Mother, go on with your story."

"There's not much more of it," replied Mrs. Miller, with a sigh. "Your father never came back to me. In all these long years—years of poverty and trial—I have never heard a word from him."

Mrs. Miller began to cry again.

About this time the door of the room was softly opened, and the head of a man appeared.

"Land an' ocean!" he muttered, "there they are. The mother and the two boys. I know 'em, though I haven't seen 'em for so long a time."

He stepped softly into the room.

"I'll listen," he said, "it will do me good to hear 'em talk."

"How many years ago is it, mother?" asked Charles.

"It is seven, next July."

"Do you think he will ever come?" asked Walter.

"I'll never give him up while I live," exclaimed Mrs. Miller.

"Susan," said a voice.

"Great Heaven!" cried Mrs. Miller, turning round, "whose voice is that, so like my husband's?"

"It's a man in our room," shouted Charles, in alarm.

"You are—" cried Mrs. Miller, looking intently into the face of the man.

"Your long-lost husband, Susan."

"Charles."

The wife and husband were instantly locked in an embrace which only relaxed when the boys rushed forward for a share from their new-found father.

"Where did you come from, husband?" asked Mrs. Miller, with her first breath; "why, we were talking about you."

"I heard you," he replied, laughing; "you were so interested that you didn't hear me come in. Well, I'll tell you where I came from. I reached the wharf in New York yesterday in my own ship from Liverpool."

"Have you got a ship—a big ship?" asked Walter, dancing in front of his father.

"Yes, my son—you shall go on board, too. Well, Susan, as soon as we made fast I took a few things in a valise, and started for Brooklyn, to find you at

the old place. A boy helped me along with the valise to the Catherine Ferry. When I got over there nobody knew anything about you. It was too late to find you that night, so I went to a hotel. All day to-day I have been chasing about, following one clew and another, until, at last, I found your place of abode. You and the boys seem well."

"Yes, thank God! we're in good health. But, Charles, why did you leave me, and where have you been all this time?"

"It is a long story," returned Captain Miller, "but I will tell you enough to-night to satisfy your natural curiosity on the subject."

It was a pleasant-looking family group. Mr. Miller and his wife were seated side by side, Walter was on his father's knee, and Charles was leaning affectionately on his shoulder.

"To begin," said Captain Miller, "when I went away that day, I didn't remember anything until the ship was off Staten Island, going to sea. They had shipped me, when intoxicated, for a voyage to China."

"That's on the other side of the world," broke in Walter.

"So it is, my son. Well, I was very sorry when I came to myself, and found that I must leave my family in such a manner. We always loved one another, didn't we, Susan?" said the captain, taking his wife's hand.

"To be sure we did, Charles, and that made your going so strange," replied Mrs. Miller, warmly.

"Before the ship got to China, we were captured by pirates. We fought for our ship, and many on both sides were killed. But they overpowered us, plundered the ship, and then set her on fire, and took the rest of us in their own vessel as prisoners."

"What wicked men," said Charles.

"Yes," answered his father; "the Chinese pirates are bold and cruel men. To go on with my narrative, they kept us prisoners on an island for a long time, but some of us finally stole a boat and got away. We reached Hong Kong in a state of starvation. There I found employment on a steamboat running on one of the rivers."

"Why didn't you write to mother?" inquired Charles.

"Yes," said Mrs. Miller, laughing, "that's what I want to know."

"Well," said the captain, coloring a little, "I ought to have done so, but I had been gone so long that I thought I would wait awhile longer. I was on the go all the time on the steamboat, and time slipped away rapidly."

"It hung heavy enough on my hands," remarked Mrs. Miller, with a sigh.

"Well, well, it's all right, now," said her husband, kissing her.

"He's got a ship at the dock now," said Walter.

"So I have," replied the father, laughing, "and I'll tell you how that came about. I got to be the pilot, and then the captain of the steamboat. I got good wages, and I made money on the merchandise that I bought. Next, I sailed for England as the captain and part owner of a ship and cargo. At Liverpool I loaded for New York, and here I am."

"Why, Charles, my dear," said Mrs. Miller, in some excitement, "you must be a rich man."

"I am worth," replied the captain, proudly, "half the value of the finest clipper that ever entered the port of New York."

"Thank God! thank God!" cried Mrs. Miller, "the days of our poverty are over."

"I'll never sell another paper," cried Charles. "I don't like it."

"My father owns a ship, hurrah!" cried Walter.

Tears and joy were in the eyes of all.

"I wish Sharp Sam was here to see father," said Charles.

"Who's Sharp Sam?" asked the captain, in surprise.

Then they told the story of Sam.

"Now, I wonder," said Captain Miller, reflecting,

"if that boy who helped me with my valise last night was not Sharp Sam. The description fits him exactly."

"Wouldn't it be strange if he had met father first?" said Charles. "He'll turn up some day, I guess."

The following day Captain Miller provided the entire family with new clothing, and they removed to a hotel. The story of the husband's return ran like wildfire through the tenement-house, and the congratulations were universal and sincere. Mrs. Miller, as a last act before she went, divided her furniture, and some other effects, among the tenants, causing blessings to be showered upon her.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SHARP SAM'S SAILOR CHAMPION.

DANGER and adventure seemed to follow Sharp Sam wherever he went.

After much delay and difficulty Mr. Worden had succeeded in obtaining the release of Sam from the Tombs. The indictment against him was legally disposed of, but Mr. Worden was obliged to become bail for his appearance at both the trial of Clark and of the gang.

Mr. Worden took Sam home with him, and gave him some pocket-money.

"Do as you please," he said, "but look out that you are not kidnapped. You know a great deal against some people, and their friends might try to put you out of the way."

It was a fact that the most determined efforts were being made to save Lacy, and the different members of his gang under arrest. They had been scattered, broken up, and most of them apprehended, but there were others still at liberty who were exerting every nerve to save those in prison.

When Lacy heard of the release of Sam, he said:

"They expect to use that youngster as a witness, do they? Well, we'll see."

His countenance looked dark, and he shook his head significantly.

During the afternoon Sam got tired of staying indoors, and concluded that he would walk out a short distance.

"It's daylight," he said, "an' the streets are full of people. Nobody could hurt me at such a time."

He did not intend to go far, but he became interested in the passing carriages and crowds of people, and wandered on without thinking.

After awhile somebody caught him by the arm, and said:

"Why, Sharp Sam!"

"Charlie Miller!"

"It's me."

"Why, you're all dressed up," said Sam, observing that Charles's appearance was entirely changed.

"So I am," said the boy, proudly. "We're somebody now, and live at a hotel."

"Does your mother live at a hotel now?" asked Sam, in wonderment. "Is she doin' the washin' there?"

Charles curled his lip, scornfully.

"She'll never wash for anybody any more," he cried. "Father has come home a captain, and owner of a ship."

"Gas," said Sam. "Come, I'm no fool."

Charles now told the whole strange and romantic story of his father's going away, long absence, and final return.

"If you don't believe what I say, come round to the hotel, on Fourth avenue, and see for yourself. Mother and father want to see you, anyhow."

"I'll go," cried Sam.

He went to the hotel, and was soon ushered into a fine suit of rooms.

His welcome from Mrs. Miller and Walter was most affectionate. As soon as Captain Miller saw him, he said:

"I thought as much. You are the very boy who carried my valise."

"The very fellow," said Sam, laughing. "You paid me well, too."

Then he told all about his own troubles and adventures.

"But," said he, "I've found a great friend in Mr. Worden. He's going to send me to school, and then set me up in business. I live at his house, on Fifth avenue, now. It's a splendid place, full of lookin'-glasses, pictures, an' all kinds of nice things."

"It ain't as nice as our ship," said Walter.

Then they all laughed at Walter's remark, and Sam promised, at his first opportunity, to go on board.

"I'm only waitin' to testify at these trials," he said, "an' then I'm goin' to school. After that I'll go to work an' make a fortune. Mr. Worden says there's many a rich man in New York who was a poor boy in the beginnin'."

"Those are the self-made men," said Captain Miller. "Our country is full of them. Make them your examples, and you will do well."

"I must be off. I don't like to stay late. There's some bad men want me out of the way. Good-by, all."

Sam shook hands all round, and then left the room.

"Captain," said Mrs. Miller, looking out of the window, "it is growing late. Suppose you follow Sam a little way, and see that no one molests him."

"I will, certainly," replied Captain Miller, taking his hat and going out.

The vigilance and patience of the villains of a city in working out their plans are among their most notable characteristics. The men of the Lacy gang were already on the track of Sam. A watch had been kept upon Mr. Worden's house ever since he had entered it, and he had been followed during the whole afternoon. When he entered the hotel, two men posted themselves where they could watch all the doors.

"Bill, I wonder what the kid wants in there?" said one of the men.

"He seems to know the other boy pretty well, Pete; I've a notion that we'll have trouble 'fore we get hold of him," replied Bill.

The men were very rough-looking fellows. They did not belong in New York, but had been sent for in Philadelphia.

"We've mastered a good many of 'em," said Bill.

"What plan are you goin' to take, Bill?" asked Pete.

"I'm puzzled to know what to do. I thought if we got a chance to talk to him, we might tell him we were officers, and hurry him off before he could make any trouble."

"Our chance is improvin' the longer he stays in there. It's growin' dark, now."

"When he comes out," said Bill, who was the leader in the business, "we'll follow at his heels, an' the first chance we git, clip him over the head an' make off."

"Now, follow," said the ruffian, Bill, "an' knock him the first chance."

"All right," returned Pete.

Sam went up two blocks from the hotel, and then he turned through a cross street toward Fifth avenue. The street he had selected was one with houses on only one side, while the other was the long side wall of Gilmore's Garden. By some chance, too, he went to the walk which skirts this wall.

"By all that's lucky," said Pete, "he's taken the very street that suits our plan."

They ran over to the same side.

Sam was not a timid boy, but he hastened his steps and felt apprehensive, because he knew there was danger to him in the street at that hour. However, he saw, only a block off, the hundreds of lights in Madison Square, and he felt half-ashamed of his fears.

The ruffians drew nearer.

Sam heard the footsteps and looked back.

"I don't like those fellows comin' on me in that way," he said.

At the same time Bill and Pete became aware that there was a man close behind them.

"It's now or never," said Bill.

"Suppose we let this chap behind pass us," suggested Pete.

"He won't do it," replied Bill, excitedly. "Every time we hold up, he does the same. I don't know what he means. I wish we could give him a touch of the knuckles for followin'."

"This is the best spot," said Pete; "in a minute the kid will be in the light of Madison Square."

They advanced rapidly upon Sam, and both were on the eve of striking him, when each received a tremendous blow alongside of their heads.

"Run, Sam, for your life," cried the voice of Captain Miller; "these men want to kill you."

Sam fled like a deer.

The men, though for the moment stunned, sprung up and dashed off in another direction.

Captain Miller was left victorious and alone. The whole affair had been so quick that the few passers did not know what it meant.

As he turned to go back to the hotel, Captain Miller could but exclaim:

"It was lucky I followed that boy, they would have killed him, without doubt. Well, I shall have more news for Mrs. M. and the boys."

Sam did not stop running until he got to Mr. Worden's door. When he related what had befallen him, Mr. Worden said:

"It is fortunate for you that your friend Captain Miller came up. You must stay indoors for the present."

"I won't stir a peg unless some one goes with me—it ain't safe," replied Sam.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MARRIAGE-BELLS.

THE clouds which hung over some of our characters had passed away, and the sunshine of joy was streaming upon them.

The marriage-bells were about to ring for Miss Worden, and within her home all was gladness again.

Her recovery from the effects of her treatment by Black Kate was rapid. The reaction of her feelings, from the deepest distress to that of perfect tranquillity, soon brought the natural bloom to her cheeks.

As the full developments of the plot in which Clark had been engaged were revealed, she, like all others, was astonished at its enormity.

It had one good effect, however. Formerly a confirmed flirt, and ready to make intimates of hastily made male acquaintances in society, she now saw the great danger of it.

"As soon as you are convalescent," said her mother to her one morning, "I hope that you will allow Mr. Vincent to see you. He has called every day to inquire about you."

The beauty bit her lip and colored. The mention of the gentleman brought up a flood of recollections, which were self-rebuking to her.

"Do you think I ought to see him?" asked the daughter.

"Certainly, my dear," said the mother. "Why not?"

"I have treated him very badly. How can he forget or forgive it?"

"He is a noble fellow, and he understands your true worth too much to treasure up any unkindness."

"And so Mr. Vincent has called every day," said Miss Worden, looking archly at her mother.

"Every day, and sometimes twice, the servants have told me."

"You were sick—perhaps it was an attention to you, from an old friend of the family."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the mother; "it was nothing of the kind. His bouquets and hot-house fruit, if you will remember, were left with his compliments for you."

Miss Worden pulled a rose to pieces, which she held in her hand, and seemed quite abstracted with her own thoughts.

She never looked more beautiful. Her sickness had given her a delicate paleness, which only increased her attractiveness.

"Perhaps," she said, "I might like Mr. Vincent again. I believe he is a most honorable man. I will see him when next he calls."

"I'm most happy to hear you say that," returned the mother. "Both your father and myself esteem Mr. Vincent beyond any acquaintance you have."

"We were good friends in the past."

"Yes, until that viper crossed our threshold. I hope you will not only be friends, but something more."

"Oh, mother—mother," exclaimed Miss Worden, throwing some of the rose leaves toward her, "you are 'match-making' again!"

Not long after this the announcement of the engagement of Miss Sallie Worden and Mr. Jasper Vincent was duly promulgated in the world of fashion. More than this, their marriage was announced to take place within a few weeks, prior to their departure for Europe.

All was now excitement at the Worden mansion. There was to be a grand wedding. The ceremony was to be performed in Trinity Chapel, and then a reception was to take place at the house.

Sharp Sam was as busy as a bee. Dressed in clothes made for him by Mr. Worden's tailor, with his hair cut, and his face clean, no one would have known him for the poor boy of the streets. It is hardly necessary to say that he was now perfectly happy.

The whole Worden family regarded him with great favor. His natural intelligence, his good-nature, and his fidelity, to say nothing of the special services he had rendered to them, made him a favorite.

After consultation, it had been determined to make him a substantial reward. The time agreed upon for it was the morning of the day before the wedding.

Mr. and Mrs. Worden, their daughter, and Mr. Vincent, all assembled in the library.

"Sam, you're wanted in the library," said John, the servant. "There's a family meetin' in there."

"Can't git 'long without me, I suppose?" replied Sam, with his usual humor.

"I think from what I've heard, that the meetin's 'bout you."

"I hope I ain't done nothin' to 'fend 'em," said Sam, in some apprehension.

"Go in an' see. I don't think you have," said John, encouragingly.

With fear and trembling, Sam entered the room.

"Here I am," said Sam. "Please, Mr. Worden, I ain't done nothin' wrong. Don't send me away."

"You misunderstand," said Mr. Worden, in a most kindly tone.

"We do not wish to send you away," added Mrs. Worden, "but have some good news for you."

"Good news!" exclaimed Sam, "has that 'ere Clark 'fessed?"

They all could but laugh at his earnest manner, and the nature of the question, showing what was uppermost in his mind.

"No, Sam," said Mr. Worden, "it is something different from that, but quite as beneficial to you."

"Tell me right off!" cried Sam.

"Sam," said Mr. Worden, with much feeling, "you know that to-morrow my daughter is to be married. This will be a happy event to all of us."

"It will be to me, too," broke in Sam, looking toward Miss Worden and her affianced and smiling.

"If you had not acted on the information you obtained," continued Mr. Worden, "it is probable that she would have been murdered. You saved her life."

"I'd do it ag'in, too," cried Sam.

"Thank you, my noble boy," said Miss Worden, wiping the tears from her eyes.

"Your future interests," Mr. Worden went on to

say, "must be considered. In our happiness we cannot forget how much we owe to you. Look at this," holding up a small, thin book. "It is the book of a savings bank, and on this page it says that ten thousand dollars have been deposited in the — Bank, which belong to you."

"Ten thousand dollars—belong to me," repeated Sam, in a bewildered manner.

"The money," continued Mr. Worden, "is a sum to which each of those present has contributed. When you are twenty-one you can draw principal and interest—it will then be a large sum. Until you are of age I will supply all your wants."

"Bless you, sir!—bless all of you!" said Sam, with emotion.

We draw the curtain of privacy on this affecting scene. All were happy.

The chimes of Trinity Chapel rung out the wedding peals. Soft, silvery and merrily the music broke upon the evening air.

The chancel of the church was decorated with natural flowers, and as the fashionable throngs in full dress entered, appropriate music was brilliantly performed on the organ.

The abduction of Miss Worden had made her name familiar to the public, and her wedding was thus the cause of not only a fashionable but general excitement.

To a splendid wedding-march the bridal-party entered. It was a sight to behold them. There were ten bridesmaids, all lovely young ladies, and magnificently adorned. The bride outshone them all, however, in beauty and in the costliness of her costume. The bridegroom and the groomsmen were handsome men.

Take it all in all, even gay New York had seldom seen such a wedding display. After the ceremony, a thronged reception took place. A steamer of the next day bore the happy couple to Europe, for an extensive bridal tour.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CRIMINAL'S EXIT.

RETRIBUTION for crime, though often delayed, is sure to come. No offense against nature and against law ever went, or ever will go, unpunished.

The punishment of the criminals whose career has formed a part of our story, promised to be severe and general.

Lacy, and the other members of the gang who had been apprehended, had been indicted, and demanded separate trials. They employed the best criminal lawyers of the New York bar, and a most determined effort was made to save them from conviction.

But nothing could save them. Their crimes had been too numerous, and the people of the city were too much aroused for any hesitation on the part of the juries or judges."

One after another they were consigned, for long terms, to the State Prison. Jacobs's evidence was used against the others, and he was liberated on the condition that he should leave the country.

In New Jersey, Black Kate and the negro man were convicted, and sent to the State Prison at Trenton.

The trial of Beekman, *alias* Clark, for thus he was named in the indictment for murder, was reserved for the last. It was the most important, and public excitement on the subject increased as the time for it drew near.

Beekman, for by his right name we must again call him, was cool in villainy, but humiliation overwhelmed him.

"I could stand up to any deed," he cried, in his lonely cell, the day before the trial was to begin, "and never flinch; but to go into the court-room to-morrow, and stand the gaze of the mob of New York, it unmans me!"

He walked up and down in great distress.

"I am a sort of show for these prison fellows," he said, bitterly. "They parade me with the greatest

publicity whenever they can, and every trial day will be a gala day for them, and the mob who pant for my blood."

He gazed wildly about the cell.

"Nearly every day they have some here and searched it," he continued. "They have not left me a thing by which I could do myself the slightest possibly injury."

He stood silent for a few moments, and then burst forth again.

"All earth and hell," he cried, "are leagued against me. Tiger—monster though I am, I can now do nothing to scatter and destroy my enemies—nothing, absolutely nothing, to avert the doom which is fast coming upon me."

He dressed himself with great care early on the following morning. Shaving, perfuming—nothing was neglected to make him look like a fashionable gentleman.

Still, when he went from the prison, there was a handcuff under his coat-sleeve which fastened him to the officer who walked and rode at his side.

In front of the Tombs, in Center street, and in front of the Court House crowds had collected. They rushed wildly about to obtain a glimpse of the celebrated prisoner.

"You draw a crowd like a circus," said one of the officers.

"Curse them!" exclaimed Beekman, angrily; "let the coach ride over them!"

The officers smiled, but did not say anything. It required a considerable number of them to open the way to the court-room.

Pale and exhausted, Beekman at last reached a small room connected with the court-room, where the trial was to take place. Here the handcuff was taken off, and he was allowed to recover himself.

At length the clerk of the court rose, and said:

"Place Henry Beekman at the bar."

Then the officers brought him into the court-room, and he was allowed to take a seat by the side of his counsel at a table. He walked in erect, and, seemingly, unembarrassed.

The room was large, but crowded with people. Within the railing were a great many lawyers and prominent persons, and every seat allotted to the public was filled, while hundreds more stood waiting at the doors for the first opportunity to enter. In one of the corners, seated with Mr. Worden, was Sharp Sam.

"There he comes," said Sam, excitedly, as Beekman entered. "How nice he looks."

"He don't look much like a murderer," said Mr. Worden.

"I'm sorry for him," said Sam; "but I'm going to tell the whole truth."

"It is your duty," said Mr. Worden.

The trial consumed many days. There was difficulty in getting a jury, and then, the testimony was fought at every step by the counsel on one side or the other.

Every day the same scenes of the first were enacted, and Beekman suffered a daily martyrdom.

The history of Beekman was clearly traced.

At length Sam was placed on the stand. He gave frank, direct testimony, and positively identified Beekman as the man whom he had seen running down the stairs. On his direct examination, he made a most favorable impression upon court and jury.

"Now break him down—confuse him—annihilate him," whispered Beekman to his lawyers, when they were about to open the cross-examination.

"I think we can—he is only a boy," was the encouraging reply.

But, after many efforts they utterly failed to do it. Sam rose in intelligence and courage for the occasion, and, after the most searching and perplexing cross questioning, he left the stand with all his statements repeated and maintained.

At last the prosecution introduced a piece of evidence which was a surprise to everybody. The

executor of Mrs. Beekman, the woman murdered, was placed on the stand, and he testified that, in overhauling her effects, he had found a carbuncle seal ring. This was produced, and exhibited to the court and jury. Next, a jeweler was sworn, who proved, from his books, that he sold a carbuncle ring on the day before the murder. He further swore that the ring produced in court was the one, and that he sold it to the prisoner at the bar.

In Beekman's quaking heart the last hope now died out.

The defense was a total failure. Then came the summing up on both sides, the charge of the judge, and then a short deliberation on the part of the jury.

The jury came in, and the great crowd awaited breathlessly for the verdict.

Beekman was told to stand up. He tried to do so without support, but was obliged to catch the back of his chair.

"Prisoner," said the clerk, solemnly, "look upon the jurors; jurors look upon the prisoner; how say you, do you find Richard Beekman *alias* Clark, guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty of murder in the first degree," said the foreman.

The prisoner reeled, but did not fall. The audience breathed again.

Then came other formalities. Next the district attorney moved for the immediate sentence of the prisoner, on the ground of the enormity of the offense. His lawyers resisted this strenuously, but without avail.

The judge directed the prisoner to be placed at the bar for sentence. He was asked if he had anything to say. He signified that he had.

Every eye was upon him, and he knew it. Handsome in feature and commanding in form, he stood, now a convicted murderer, before the bar of justice. Still he did not bow his head, but he elevated it, and thus spoke:

"I am convicted, and must answer in the full penalty. All that I have to ask is that the court will now pass sentence, without further harrowing my feelings by allusions to my past life."

He bowed and stopped.

The judge, deeply moved, proceeded to pass the death-sentence. He told the prisoner that he could not altogether conform to his request, and he touchingly alluded to the ancient family to which Beekman belonged, many of its members having been friends of his own.

Then came the sentence, "To be taken to the place from which you came, and on Friday, the day of —, that you be hanged by the neck, and may God have mercy on your soul."

The sheriff's officer led Beekman away. He did not fall, and he did not see, as far as he was conscious of it, but bewildered—benumbed—he followed mechanically.

He faced the crowds, but he heard not their taunting shouts and ribald remarks. He only knew that he walked erect, and bore himself before them like a man.

In the solitude of his cell he melted for the second time since he came to the prison. The very fountains of remorse and sorrow seemed broken up, and he sobbed until he fell asleep.

For him pleasure was no more. For him the beauty of earth was no more.

As soon as a prisoner is sentenced to death in New York, he is placed in a strong cell in "Murderer's Row," in the Tombs. He is allowed every comfort, consistent with the discipline of the prison, but is guarded most rigidly.

Great efforts were made to delay the execution of Beekman, but they did not succeed in a single instance.

There was no hope.

Preparations for the execution had been commenced.

The prisoner at last gave himself up to the duties

and conversation becoming one about to enter eternity.

The day previous to the execution had come.

It is always a solemn one in the Tombs. The noise of the hammering on the gallows sounds unpleasantly; there is an evidence of depression in the faces of the prisoners, and officials go about their duties seriously and quietly.

The night passes slowly. The prisoner is constantly watched by a detail of deputy sheriffs, as he has been for weeks, day and night.

Early in the morning the prisoner is taken to the chapel for religious exercises. Then he eats a breakfast of whatever he chooses to order. Then come prayer and conversation with the ministers.

Next, the high sheriff of the county, with his deputies, marches up to the cell. Then the short rope is put about the prisoner's neck, and the black cap on his head.

When all is ready, the solemn procession goes, with a measured tramp, down the corridor, through the main door, and then along the yard to the place where the gallows has been erected.

In this yard is always a crowd of people in waiting. They are persons who wish to witness the execution, and are enabled to do so by obtaining appointments as deputy sheriffs for the day. There is also a certain number sworn as the jury, to officially certify to the execution. Judges and other officials can attend by right or courtesy of their offices. A body of police always attends to preserve order. Consequently, the executions, though private as far as the general public are concerned, are not so as a matter of fact. The tops of the neighboring houses, and the neighboring streets, are always crowded with people, but they cannot see the execution. The prisoners in cells on the side of the prison where the gallows is placed, put pieces of looking-glass in the windows, and the terrible scene is reflected before their eyes.

Beekman stood beneath the gallows.

He was bound, the rope about his neck had been fastened to another connected with the gallows, and the minister was uttering the last prayer.

"Have you anything to say?" asked the sheriff, in a low tone.

"Say to those beyond these walls that I died a brave man."

He stood erect, like a soldier on parade. He was pale, but his eyes were full of fire and life. The cap was now drawn down, and he saw the last of earth forever. Then, the sheriff took out a white pocket-handkerchief. This was the signal for the ropes holding the weights to be cut by the executioner, who was concealed in an upright box, near at hand. Up rose the doomed man; he struggled in the cords which bound him, a tremor passed through his frame, and soon all was over.

The law was vindicated and justice was satisfied. The body was given to the doctors. The name and crimes of Henry Beekman were now to pass from daily recital to the imperishable annals of the criminal records of the city of New York.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SHARP SAM IN LUCK.

SHARP SAM became more calm and settled down after the trials, and particularly subsequent to the execution of Beekman.

"Now, you must go to school," said Mr. Worden about this time to Sam.

"That's what I want to do, sir," replied the boy, cheerfully.

Soon after he became a pupil at a boarding-school in Connecticut. It was an experience quite as novel to him as any that he had passed through. He showed great ambition to learn, but, for his age, he was very backward.

The other boys made fun of him on account of his backwardness. This made him unhappy, but he re-

solved to study all the harder. His frank, sincere nature won him friends, but, as is always the case in schools, there were others who annoyed him in every possible way that they could.

One afternoon it went beyond forbearance, and he pulled off his coat and dashed at the nearest of his tormentors.

The play-ground had never been the scene of such a fight before. Sam's blood was up, and from his earlier life in New York, he was prepared to strike skillful and powerful blows. It was not like the fighting of boys, but vigorous and desperate.

He knocked three boys down, struck several others, so that their noses began to bleed, and in five minutes every one of his enemies had been put to flight.

Sam, without a scratch, but with his clothes disarranged, and terribly excited, stood, surrounded by his friends, the hero and master of the play-ground.

"Cowards!" he exclaimed in his fury; "what do you think of the ignorant New York boy now?"

After this he was never molested, but he became the pet of the school, and the champion in all cases of the weak against the strong.

He learned with surprising rapidity, and at the end of the first term took several prizes.

His style of speech was much improved. He had lost the mispronunciation and slang which were formerly so noticeable to him. He had grown, too, and, in all respects, had changed and improved.

Mr. Worden attended the public school exercises, and at their close said to Sam:

"I am proud of you to-day, Sam. You have shown that my confidence in you is not misplaced."

"I try, sir, to deserve it," returned the boy in a voice which faltered with emotion.

"You have many a hard task before you yet; but from what you have done at the outset, I know you will keep a determined will to the end," were the encouraging words of Mr. Worden.

"When I ran in the streets of New York a poor boy," said Sam, standing erect and looking Mr. Worden directly in the face, "I had no conception how ignorant I was, or of the benefits of study. Now, however, the darkness, as well as my degradation, have passed from me."

He had a fine head, and a ruddy, handsome complexion. The boy of the streets had been already transformed into an intelligent and attractive youth.

He remained at the same school which was a prominent and extensive institution, for a number of years.

As he grew older he experienced great mortification on account of his altogether unknown origin. Very frequently questions were carelessly asked on this subject, which gave him much pain.

"Oh," he would often say, "if I had a single clew to work upon, I am sure that I could find out something."

He wrote to Mrs. Miller, but she could give no information beyond the fact that she had found him abandoned in the street.

In all his life no one had ever recognized him, no one had claimed to have any knowledge about him. He asked himself if it could be possible that he was entirely cut off from his kindred; that in all the world there was no one that held the tie of blood to him.

These thoughts made him melancholy.

"Mr. Worden," he would say, "is very kind to me, but I long to know one human being whose blood and mine are the same."

In the world, full of its associations of kinship and affection, he was, as far as kindred were concerned, absolutely alone.

He was constantly on the alert to make some discovery in this direction. He formed a habit of scanning faces, and his ardent, imploring gaze seemed to say, "Are you not kin to me?"

He told Mr. Worden of his distress and his hope that some day the mystery of his birth would be solved.

"Such matters," said Mr. Worden, "are often cleared up in an unexpected and sudden manner."

Another year passed away.

One day there came to the school, as a visitor, a lady who lived in the neighborhood. She was the daughter of a well-to-do gentleman, but there had been some peculiar circumstances attending her marriage, which had caused her to live in much seclusion. Some very fine astronomical apparatus had recently been provided for the use of the school, and she had come to see it. When she entered the room Sam was there with the Professor of Astronomy. This gentleman was acquainted with the lady, and, as soon as she entered, said:

"Mrs. Mott, do you know that I have always been struck with the remarkable resemblance which one of my pupils bears to yourself?"

"Indeed," said the lady, in evident surprise. "Who is he?"

"Master Sam Worden. He is now present, allow me to introduce him to you."

He called Sam and presented him.

"Why!" exclaimed the professor, looking from one to the other, "this is most extraordinary. The likeness is even more striking than I thought it was—every feature of both is the same."

The boy, pale and agitated, looked earnestly at the lady, and asked himself if it could be possible that the mystery of his birth was now to be cleared up.

The lady, even more agitated, said:

"Who is this boy?"

"The adopted son of Mr. Worden, of New York."

"The *adopted* son," repeated the lady, with emphasis, "do you know his history?"

"Can you answer that question, Master Worden?" asked the professor.

"I can, sir," replied the boy, trembling violently in his excitement. "I was found an abandoned child in the year 18—, in one of the streets of the City of New York. Some years ago Mr. Worden adopted me."

Mrs. Mott seemed about to faint. The professor gave her water, and opened a window.

"Madam," he said, "you seem greatly agitated. Is there any mystery here?"

"Years ago," she replied, "I was married to a man who proved utterly unworthy of me. I left him, and returned to my father's house. One day he came here and kidnapped my child and took it to New York. I never was able to find either of them."

"Did it have any mark?" asked the professor, now also growing excited.

"It did—a large mole on the right shoulder."

"My mother!" exclaimed Sam, throwing himself into her arms.

"My son! my son!" exclaimed the other, kissing and caressing the boy.

"I have a mark of that kind," said Sam.

"God," said the professor, solemnly, "has set the image of each other in your faces—the proofs that you are mother and son cannot be questioned."

The news spread like wild-fire through the large school. The teachers attempted to keep the classes in order, but it was in vain. A recess for half an hour was taken, and the whole body of pupils went to the astronomy room to congratulate Sam and his mother. He was allowed to go home with her. When they left the building it echoed and re-echoed with the shouts of the teachers and scholars.

"At last," said Sam, "I know who I am."

CHAPTER XXX.

GENTLEMAN SAM.

WE pass over several years in the career of our characters.

Captain Miller had retired from the sea and purchased a farm on Long Island, where himself, Mrs. Miller and Walter were living in great happiness. The captain owned a pretty yacht, in which he sailed on the great South Bay and sometimes took trips

out on the ocean. Charles, now well grown up, had finished his education, and was in a lawyer's office in New York preparing for admission to the bar.

Mr. Vincent and his wife returned, after a year, from Europe, and took up their residence in a new house built by him on Fifth avenue. Several children were born to them, and Mrs. Vincent proved herself a model mother, while she always remained a leader in the fashionable society of the metropolis.

Mr. Worden was growing old—his formerly dark hair was now a beautiful silvery gray. But he was still hale, cheerful and happy. His wife was going down the hill of life joyous in the society of her excellent husband, and in the love of her daughter, her son-in-law, and her grandchildren, all of whom she idolized.

The discovery of Sam's parentage, and especially as it was of such a respectable character, had given great pleasure to Mr. and Mrs. Worden and the Vincents.

Mr. Worden refused to allow himself to be released from his engagement to educate Sam.

"No, my dear madam," he said to Mrs. Mott, who was urging it, "you shall not deprive me of that pleasure and duty. I find with every day that he holds a larger place in my heart, and it is a satisfaction of the most agreeable character for me to perform this service for him."

From this time the subject was dropped, and Mr. Worden was allowed to plan out the whole of Sam's educational course. When his studies at the Academy were concluded, he entered Yale College, in New Haven, and, at length, also graduated there with honor.

Before this it had been arranged that Sam was to go into commercial business in New York. He became the junior partner in a large grain and flour house.

His capital consisted of the money placed in the savings bank for him at the time of Miss Worden's marriage.

"Behold," said Mr. Worden to him when they went to draw the money, "the benefit of *saving*. By day and by night your money has increased, and now you have a handsome capital to begin business with."

Then there appeared in the papers this advertisement:

"COPARTNERSHIP NOTICE.

"Samuel Mott has this day been admitted as a member of our firm. WILLIAM YOUNG & Co.

"NEW YORK, January 1, 18—."

The portrait of Sharp Sam, as we drew it when we first introduced him to the reader on that rainy day when he crouched in the doorway would not do for him now. Then, everything was pressing him down-bill, and he looked and acted like the vagabond which he was in condition and in feeling.

Now, he must stand before the reader quite a different person, so different, in fact, that it is difficult to realize that it is the same.

He is a tall, handsome young man, dressed with much neatness and taste. Education and refined associations have changed him in every particular, and the sign of the vagabond on his brow has been obliterated by that of the gentleman.

He seldom speaks of his earlier life. It was marked by too many sorrows, by too much that was terrible, for him to wish to recall it.

And yet, in some things, he is unchanged.

He has the same love of justice and right, the same frankness and sincerity, and the same firmness and courage.

Among his duties as a member of the grain firm was that of going to the Produce Exchange every morning.

This is the place where all the grain and flour which is brought to New York from the West and other parts of the country is sold.

Sam, as a merchant, became quite prominent on the Produce Exchange. He seemed to have a na-

tural taste for business, and his intelligence and shrewdness soon became well known in the market. "How does my boy get on with you?" asked Mr. Worden of his old friend, the senior member of the firm.

"First-rate," replied the merchant; "he seems to be a born merchant. He is quick, accurate and bold, but judicious. He has made a reputation, already, among the merchants on 'Change, and, we think, we have a treasure in such a man as a member of the firm."

This intelligence made good old Mr. Worden fairly beam with joy. Then he stily added:

"I hear that he is very fond of the society of a certain member of your family—your beautiful daughter. I hope it may prove a match."

"He is welcome to her hand," said the father, "if he can win her. They are both God's own choice spirits."

Mr. Worden went up-town in a very happy mood.

"There is one thing more I want to see," he said, "which is the marriage of Sam to a woman who will appreciate him, and make him happy. Miss Young is of the right stamp, and Mrs. Worden, and all of us, must encourage him in that direction. When he is married and settled down, I can then feel satisfied. No young man, in business or out of it, is safe in this city of temptations until he has a home of his own."

At the Christmas season following Sam was married to the wealthy and accomplished Miss Young, the daughter of his partner.

Mr. and Mrs. Worden and Mr. and Mrs. Vincent were present, and a great number of other fashionable people. Every one of the Miller family was in attendance.

"Now, my boy," said Mr. Worden, when he congratulated Sam, "you are in a safe port, at last, and your old friends need take no further trouble about you."

Here, too, we may properly close the story of his adventures. Suffice it to say, that he lived a long and honorable career as a New York merchant, and died leaving a fortune of more than a million of dollars.

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